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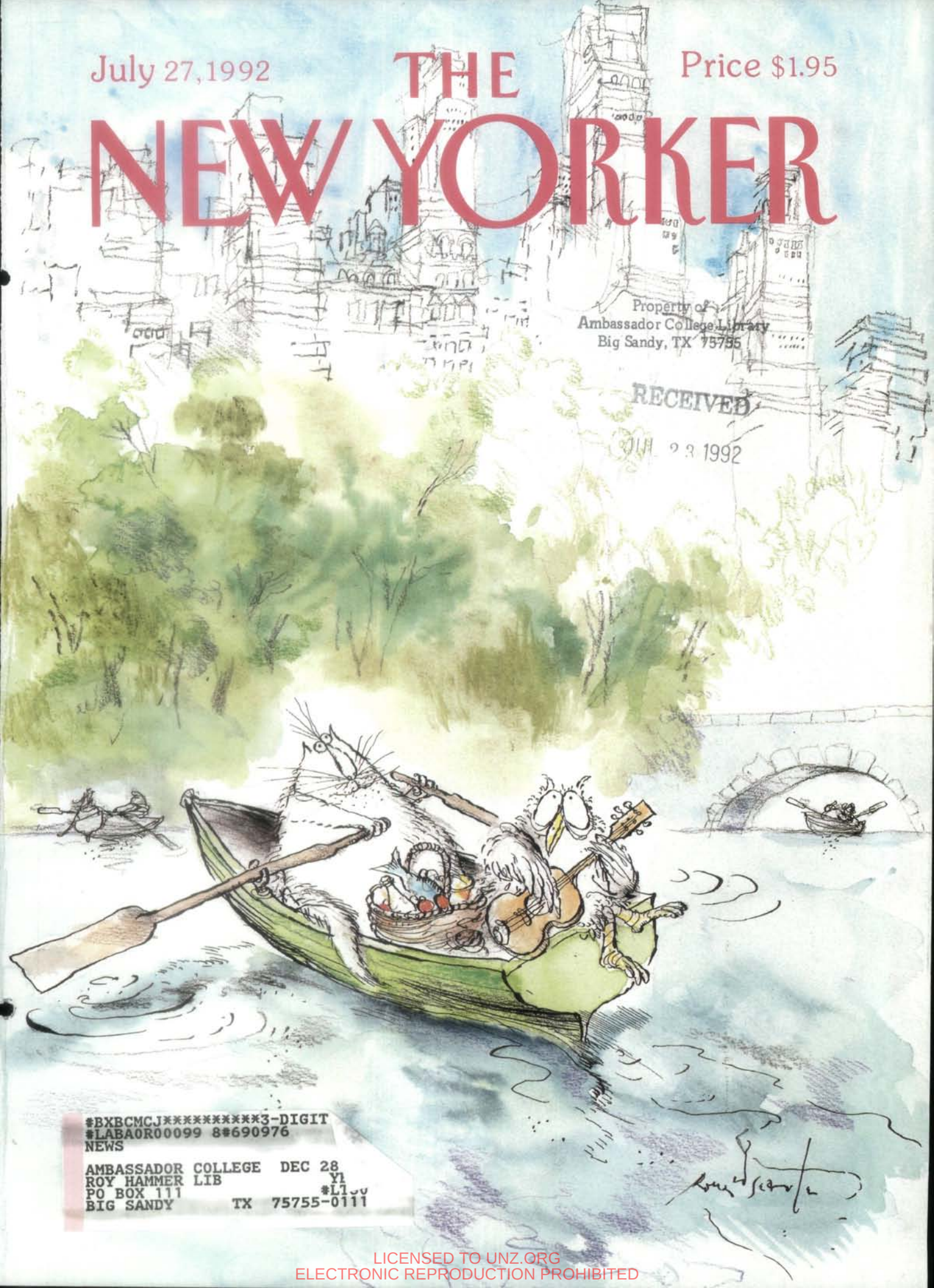

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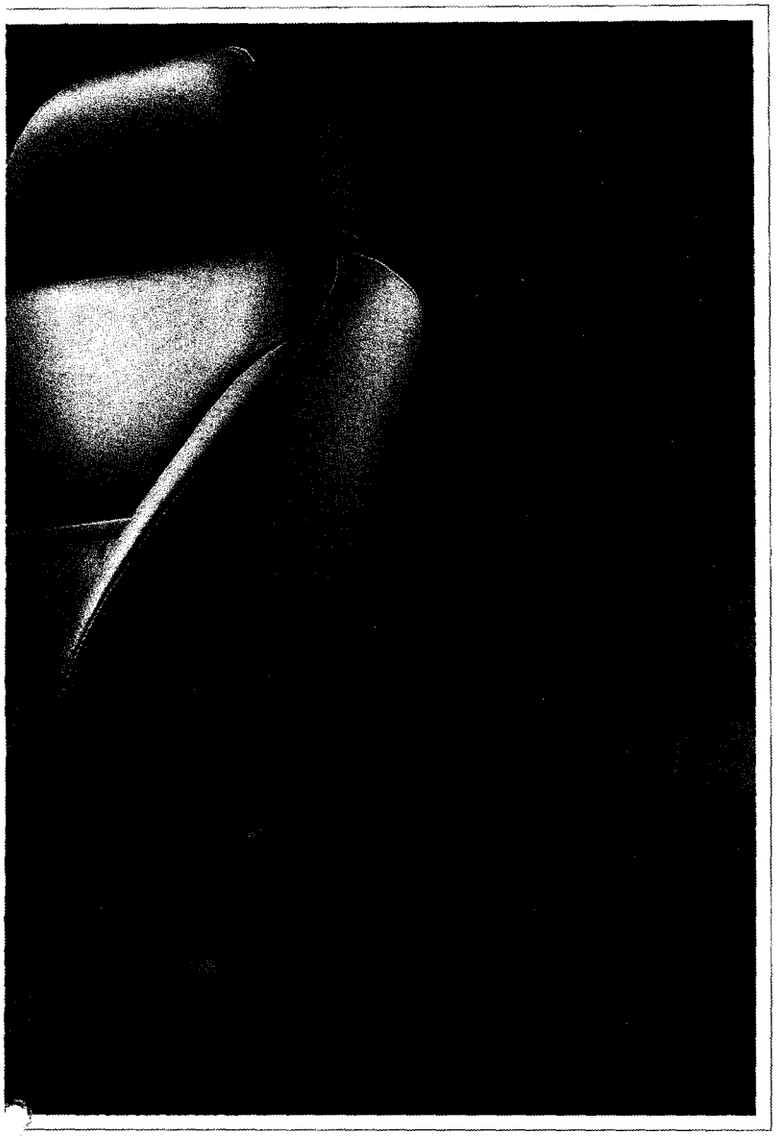

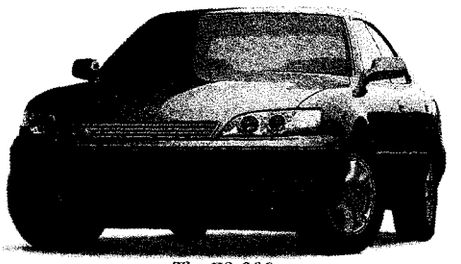

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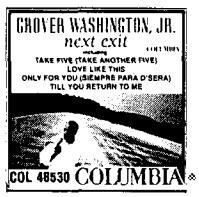

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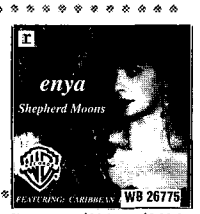

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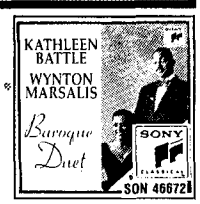

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

EVER since the title "Dreamtime" took over the marquee of the Ed Sullivan Theatre, in May, we've been wondering what the hell was going on there. The show had no advance publicity, no listing in the *Times*. A call to the theatre didn't help much. We were told that the show was conducting previews—the longest set of them on Broadway since "Nick & Nora"—and that it had no firm opening date, but that the full production would be in place on July 13. Last week, we headed over to check things out.

We should have known something was up when our money was refused at the ticket window. The attendant gave us two comps, and, in a declaration of policy not likely to be adopted anytime soon by the Shuberts, announced, "You preview audiences are our guinea pigs, so we may as well let you in for free." The audience milling around the lobby was sparse. The supply of programs was sparser, which was just as well, since they provided only scant information, most of which was conveyed via grammar and spelling as blatantly faulty (but not as charming) as those on a Chinatown menu. The program said that "Dreamtime" marked "the first public display of High Definition images in America." This was curious. Our last outing to this theatre, where the ghosts of Topo Gigio, the Beatles, and Kate & Allie are almost palpable, had been to see a high-definition videotape of Prokofiev's "War and Peace," performed by the Seattle Opera.

"Dreamtime," it turns out, is the most overtly spiritual musical to hit Broadway since the one with Dean Jones about the Shroud of Turin. Its sudsy message concerns a search for "enlightenment." The main characters are Steve, who was born in Brooklyn, and Sonia, whose birthplace—Fairfield, Iowa—happens (coincidentally?) to be the educational mecca of the Transcendental Meditation movement. There are lasers. There are live performers (all of them superfluous). There's a relentless pop score that is part Richard Marx pastiche and part Enya on angel dust. We made it through the first act, then slipped away, wondering what Ed Sullivan himself would have made of all this high-tech hokum. Maybe something along the lines of what another CBS star of the sixties, the robot on "Lost in Space," used to shout at June Lockhart and her Space Family Robinson: "Warning! Danger! It does not compute!"

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Day Dreams: The Music and Magic of Doris Day—Patty Carver stars in a musical by Jim Murphy (book) and David Levy and Darren Cohen (score and lyrics). Songs associated with Miss Day are also included. Previews July 21-22. Opens July 23 at 8. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

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OPENED RECENTLY

As You Like It—Elizabeth McGovern is relentlessly cute as Rosalind in this perennial favorite, but to what end? Adrian Hall's production, though well intentioned, is mostly charmless and uninspired. The best thing about it is the natural setting the Park provides, particularly on those clear summer nights. (Delacorte, Central Park near W. 81st St. Closes July 26. For information about tickets, which are free but required, call 861-7277.)

Balancing Act—A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

The Best of Forbidden Broadway—This tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's long-running, ever-fluctuating musical revue is, as one might expect, a treat. There is some new material, but our favorite sequences are still the spoof of "M. Butterfly" and the "Speed-the-Plow" number, "Madonna's Brain," in which David Mamet and Ron Silver try to teach Madonna to act and she ends up tearing off most of her clothes. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/4/92.) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Catskills on Broadway—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Louise DuArt does impressions. (12/23/91) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Conversations with My Father—If you're looking for a totally satisfying theatrical experience, try the new Herb Gardner, a bittersweet memory play about a Lower East Side barkeep, his two sons, and the patrons of his tavern. As staged by Daniel Sullivan, with an ace cast led by the wonderful Judd Hirsch, the play does what "Jake's Women" and "Dancing at Lughnasa" would probably do if their authors were, respectively, more sophisticated and less sentimental. Grab this one. (4/13/92) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Crazy for You—Loosely based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. The scenery is by Robin Wagner; the costumes are by William Ivey Long; and the masterly direction is by Mike Ockrent. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Death and the Maiden—Mike Nichols' Americanized version of Ariel Dorfman's play (in which Juliet Stevenson took London by storm last year) is a sad disappointment. The play, which is set in "a country that is probably Chile" and concerns a woman's attempt to punish the man she holds responsible for torturing her in captivity fifteen years before, is anything but subtle, and Glenn Close, Richard Dreyfuss, and Gene Hackman are all grossly miscast. (3/30/92) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100. Closes Aug. 2.)

Ethel Merman's Broadway—Rita McKenzie is Miss Merman in this one-woman show. Written by Miss McKenzie and Christopher Powich, who also directed. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Falsettos—This back-to-back revival of "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsetto-land," two of William Finn's three one-act musicals about a childish, self-absorbed man who leaves his wife and son for his not very nice male lover, is strictly for those who care. We've never understood the appeal of Mr. Finn's trilogy. It has a chronology as complicated as the Oedipus cycle and a dramatic sensibility akin to that of the Oresteia. To us, though, it has always seemed like banality set to music: shallow, unlikable people expressing themselves in shallow, unlikable songs. (5/11/92) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities—Anna Deavere Smith is a wily mimic and verbal caricaturist, with a sharp, discerning ear and a tongue to match. The program, which she wrote as well as performs, takes as its point of departure the aftermath of the accident last summer, in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, in which a car carrying members of a Hasidic sect went out of control and killed a black child, Gavin Cato. Miss Smith impersonates more than twenty-five people who were either directly or indirectly concerned. Her net is far-flung, and, not surprisingly, she is often strongest when funniest. Those here gathered include Angela Davis, in California; Professor Leonard Jeffries, of City College; and the omnipresent Reverend Al Sharpton. There are also a couple of rabbis; a couple of rapping street kids; a local Jewish housewife; and, most notably, Norman Rosenbaum, an Australian whose brother Yankel was stabbed to death in retribution on the night of the accident. All the material in the show was based on actual interviews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Aug. 2.)

Five Guys Named Moe—The guys are black dancers and singers of ability and spirit, who perform the songs (either lyrics or music or both) of the late Louis Jordan, among them "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," "Ain't Nobody Here but Us Chickens," and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" This London import makes a merry evening. (4/20/92) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Guys and Dolls—A lively production of Frank Loesser's perfect musical, under the direction of Jerry Zaks. Nathan Lane and Faith Prince are the leading guy and doll, and Tony Walton designed the stunning scenery. (4/27/92) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jake's Women—Alan Alda is at his genial best in the new Neil Simon. The play, about an aging writer trying to come to terms with the women in his life, past and present, is pretty much what you'd expect: some funny lines and a lot of phony dialogue. It's predictable, banal, and contrived, but at least it showcases a fine cast of actresses that includes Kate Burton and Joyce Van Patten. (4/6/92) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Jelly's Last Jam—The music of Jelly Roll Morton, self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, and, at the same time, an unsparing delineation of Morton himself. The show, an original if ever there was one, was written and directed by George C. Wolfe. In the starring role, Gregory Hines combines his astonishing talents as tap dancer and actor; Savion Glover, who plays the character as a young man, is worthy of him, which is saying a lot. Also present are Keith David, Tonya Pinkins,

Anna Deavere Smith in "Fires in the Mirror"

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Wayne Mathis, and Mary Bond Davis. Luther Henderson has adapted Morton's music and offered some music of his own; the lyrics were written by Susan Birkenhead; and Hope Clark was the choreographer. (5/11/92) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

LOTTO (EXPERIENCE THE DREAM)—A comedy by Cliff Roquemore, which has recently moved downtown from the Heckscher Theatre. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-9251.)

MAN OF LA MANCHA—The granddaddy of all junk musicals. This road-show revival is in every respect adequate to the occasion. Joan Diener and Laurence Guittard lead the cast. Tony Martinez, who plays Sancho, recently celebrated his two-thousandth performance in the role—and it shows. (5/11/92) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

MARVIN'S ROOM—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering adolescent. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, Steve Hofvendahl, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

THE MOST HAPPY FELLA—This is one musical we think the world could be without and feel no sorrow. The story of a girl forced to content herself with some old duffer because some other old duffer wanted to teach everyone a lesson about making do with what life has to offer, it's pseudo opera superimposed on pseudo Americana. As for Gerald Gutierrez's Goodspeed Opera production, it's your basic slightly-better-than-average dinner-theatre revival. What's the rumpus? (2/24/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE NIGHT LARRY KRAMER KISSED ME—A play written and performed by David Drake. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038.)

RED DIAPER BABY—Josh Kornbluth's one-man show, recently seen at Second Stage. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

RUTHLESS!—This camp musical about a monster child star is harmless and amusing enough—assuming you can stomach the little girl. She gave us the pip. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

SALOMÉ and **CHINESE COFFEE**—Al Pacino stars in two shows that are running in repertory. The first is a revival of Wilde's camp classic which also stars Sheryl Lee, the young lady whose performance as Laura Palmer in "Twin Peaks" caused such a calm. The production is so bad that it's a hoot—especially for those who don't like Pacino. But then, who doesn't like Pacino? The second production is a contemporary play by Ira Lewis. ("Salomé" was reviewed in our issue of 7/6/92.) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. "Salomé" closes July 29 and "Chinese Coffee" Aug. 1.)

SIGHT UNSEEN—Donald Margulies' engrossing new play, which is about an Eric Fischl-type painter who decides to look up an old girlfriend he once treated badly, takes the contemporary art scene to task. Technically, it also plays around with time a good deal, though never sloppily or gratuitously. You end up being affected by a curious kind of resonance—it's earned, not something you've brought with you into the theatre. (2/3/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE—Gregory Mosher's revival, with Jessica Lange in the role of Blanche DuBois, plays like a parody. It features a cuddly, avuncular Stanley (Alec Baldwin), a Stella (Amy Madigan) straight out of a Carol Burnett skit, and a lot of embarrassing staging. Miss Lange's acting is all "for the camera." One feels that she is trying to rescue the role of Blanche from decades' worth of assumptions about it but hasn't had much help or guidance from her director. (4/27/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 9.)

THE SUBSTANCE OF FIRE—Jon Robin Baitz's play about an intransigent publisher at odds with his grown children, having moved from Playwrights Horizons, seems stronger than ever in this more formal theatre. The remarkable Ron Rifkin continues in the leading role, and he is ably supported by the members of the company—Patrick Breen, John Benjamin Hickey, Cordelia Richards, and Maria Tucci. (3/9/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes July 26.)

TUBES—A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

TWO TRAINS RUNNING—August Wilson's latest, set in a Pittsburgh luncheonette in 1969, is one of those plays in which all the performances seem to be groping hotly after award nominations and everything is freighted with Meaning. (4/27/92) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.). . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.). . . **DANCING AT LUGHNASA:** How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently celebrated its thirty-second birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.). . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.). . . **LOST IN YONKERS:** This family melodrama by Neil Simon, set in Yonkers during the Second World War, is about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.). . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **MISS SAIGON:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.). . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.). . . **PERFECT CRIME:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.). . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **THE SECRET GARDEN:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** The never-ending nuptials of Anthony Angelo Nunzio and Valentina Lynne Vitale. With audience participation, as you probably know. (St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.). . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. With Mac Davis. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

DANCE

MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING, the summertime outdoor dance series at Lincoln Center Plaza, has really taken off, and a couple of weeks ago we sampled an evening of Argentine tango there. First, there was a tango lesson some four hundred people attended—taught by Danel and Maria Bastone, one of the teams who performed in the show "Tango Argentino." Then came a couple of hours of unsupervised tango dancing to the music of the Osvaldo Berlinghieri quartet, from Buenos Aires, interspersed with performances by another "Tango Argentino" team, Nelida and Nelson. By the end of the evening, more than eight hundred people had paid to enter the dance area, and several hundred more had gathered outside it to watch.

Tango dancing comes in two varieties: staged choreography, which usually contains flashy lifts, drops, twists, and hooking legs; and improvised dancing, as in Brazilian tango clubs, where there's no flash, no acrobatics, no panting stops—indeed, given the fact that several hundred couples are moving in a counterclockwise circle, almost no stops of any kind. In speaking with the Bastones after class, we learned that, for the aficionado, the improvised tango is prized far above the staged kind. "Good tango is when a man and a woman get up and dance a whole dance without stopping," Danel said. "You go from one step to another without telegraphing your intentions. If you must stop for a few seconds, the movement still has life."

During the evening, the Bastones introduced us to several people they called "tango fanatics." One of them was the actor Robert Duvall, who had just returned to New York from Buenos Aires, where he was appearing as host in a documentary on the tango for *National Geographic*. He explained that he hadn't really latched on to the tango until six years ago, when he started to take lessons and wound up marrying a fellow-student. A TV crew approached Mr. Duvall and asked for a sound-bite. "Sure," he said. "Tango is sweetness."

Midsummer Night Swing winds up this week, with evenings of foxtrot and waltz, salsa and merengue, and swing.

IN TOWN

PILOBOLUS—In an engagement that runs through Aug. 15. July 20 and July 22-23 at 8: "The Particle Zoo," "Axons," "Clandestiny," "Pseudopodia," and "Sweet Purgatory" (New York première). . . . ¶ July 21 and July 24 at 8, July 25 at 2, and July 29 at 8: "Ciona," "Moonblind," "Shizen," "Walklyndon," "Ocellus," "Pseudopodia," and "Untitled.". . . ¶ July 25 and July 27 at 8: "The Particle Zoo," an unnamed work (première), "Televisitation," and "Début C.". . . ¶ July 28 at 8: "Land's Edge," another unnamed work (première), "Alraune," "Walklyndon," and "Day Two." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

DAVID ROUSSEVE/REALITY—Excerpts from "Urban Scenes/Creole Dreams." With musical accompaniment from B. J. Crosby and the Lavender Light Gospel Choir. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. July 22 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

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MARTA RENZI—With her troupe, in a work created in collaboration with the musician and composer Steve Elson. Tap dancer Jane Goldberg is also on the bill. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 24 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY—In a single performance of "Company B." Singer Maxene Andrews opens for the company. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. July 28 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING—Final evenings of swinging round the fountain at Lincoln Center. July 22: The Bob January orchestra. . . . ¶ July 23: Adalberto Santiago and his orchestra. . . . ¶ July 24: The Roy Gerson Swing Septet. . . . ¶ July 25: Illinois Jacquet. (Evenings at 8:15. On July 22-23, dance lessons are offered at 6:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5400.)

OUT OF TOWN

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—Final performances of the Saratoga season. July 21 at 8:15: "Apollo," "In G Major," "Herman Schmerman," and "Mercury.". . . ¶ July 22 at 8:15: "Jeu de Cartes," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Antique Epigraphs," and "Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 2.". . . ¶ July 23 at 2: "Apollo," "Delight of the Muses," and "The Four Temperaments.". . . ¶ July 23 at 8:15: "Jeu de Cartes," "Prodigal Son," and "Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 2.". . . ¶ July 24 at 8:15: "Apollo," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Antique Epigraphs," and "Delight of the Muses.". . . ¶ July 25 at 2: "Donizetti Variations," "Jeu de Cartes," and "Prodigal Son.". . . ¶ July 25 at 8: "Monumentum pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra," "Prodigal Son," and "Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 2." (Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs. 1-518 587-3330.)

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL—Jacob's Pillow Men Dancers: The Ted Shawn Legacy, July 21-23 at 8, July 24 at 8:30, and July 25 at 2 and 8:30. Presenting works by Ted Shawn, José Limón, Stephen Petronio, and others. . . . ¶ Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, July 24 at 8, July 25 at 5, and July 26 at 7. In "Strange Attractors" and "Woman Window Square.". . . ¶ Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, July 28-29 at 8. Through Aug. 1. (Becket, Mass. 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

SEBADOH'S first few records were such a hiss-ridden, no-budget mixture of bedroom-studio nonsense and brilliance that when you listened to them you kept expecting to hear the singer's mother call him down to dinner. Lou Barlow, who launched the group in the late eighties, played bass for Dinosaur Jr. in a former life, and Sebadoh's inward and acoustic ways were clearly a reaction to all the noise Barlow had been making in that earlier group. Over the past few years, Sebadoh has been quite prolific. (It's not unusual for one of their vinyl singles to have seven songs on it, or for one of their albums to have two dozen.) And, gradually, Sebadoh has settled in to a more standardized form of alternative rock and has even taken the tiniest steps toward pop. The group is currently at the height of its powers—some recent demo tapes landed them a deal with the now famous Seattle label Sub Pop. They will be appearing at Maxwell's on July 25.

By now, it's well known that Nirvana's success has whopped the music industry upside the head, and that record companies are offering million-dollar contracts to bands that are more used to scrounging for gas money. What's interesting is that some groups, like Pavement, which will roll into Maxwell's for a two-night stand July 28-29, are actually doing their damnedest to remain unknown and unknowable. Pavement's début album, "Slanted and Enchanted," is the be-all and end-all on college radio at the moment, but, in an effort to retain their underground cool, the band has taken to avoiding or bullshitting the media and just generally doing the iconoclastic thing. In the end, of course, groups like Pavement spend more man-hours on *not* developing an image than most bands do on trying to dream one up. (The hardcore outfit Fugazi is another group that's famous for its refusal to be famous.) In any case, "Slanted and Enchanted" is a wild, cocksure record. Pavement wears its influences on its sleeve—the Fall and the Velvet Underground come rushing to mind—but there's something wonderfully brazen about the reckless way its music shifts gears. It's difficult to say how far Pavement will go, but, then again, the band doesn't seem to be dying to find out.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Singer **KT SULLIVAN**, who won this year's "Outstanding Female Vocalist" award from the Manhattan Association of Cabarets, is currently making her début in the Oak Room. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings and mounted O'Keeffian animal skulls. Look closer and you'll find that the skulls are wearing earrings. After the show, be sure to check out the adjoining restaurant/tapas bar, which looks like the indoor food market of your dreams, and features a mural filled with people resembling Bob, Carol, Ted, and Alice. The political impressionist and satirist **JIM MORRIS** is here through July 26. Morris, who's been lampooning Presidents, would-be Presidents, and media pooh-bahs since the early Reagan years, will be unveiling his Clinton and Perot (remember Perot?), as well as offering his surprisingly lived-in impressions of the Gipper and his heir. In the "news conference" portion of the show, audience members will have a chance to grill the "politicians." Beginning on July 27, the club will host "All Ellington," a revue of the composer's hits (as well as some lesser known tunes) featuring the quartet **ALL FOUR FUN**. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen. **BLOSSOM DEARIE** sings and plays on Fridays and Saturdays at six-thirty and on Sundays at three. Closed Mondays.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? **ERNESTINE ANDERSON** performs July 21-26, in a double bill with **HANK CRAWFORD'S** quartet; the **WILLIE WILLIAMS** quartet appears on July 27; and **GEORGE HOWARD** begins work on July 28. Music from nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This big, airy folk-and-rock club tends to be the site of a lot of music-industry bashes. If you have trouble getting tickets to the early show, it's usually because some record company has bought the place out. The atmosphere here, as a result, can be a bit weird: the record-company types have to have fun, because their own artists are onstage, but they can't have too much fun, because their bosses are watching. The later shows, though they're not as well attended and though they tend to run late, are much looser in spirit. The **EDGAR WINTER** band performs on July 22. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Next door, there's a bustling, garishly lit market. Within the narrow walls of this venerable piano-and-bass preserve, however, everything is easy on the eyes and ears. The **PHILLIP HARPER** trio is here July 20-25; **KEVIN EUBANKS, JAMES WILLIAMS,** and **DAVE HOLLAND** perform on July 26; and the **STEVE NELSON** trio begins work on July 27. Music from ten. Dining.

CLUB 53, Sixth Ave. at 53rd St. (261-5853)—A new cabaret in the New York Hilton where you can sink into deep sofas and eat off of big plates. **PEGGY LEE** kicks off an engagement on July 28. The singer, who was born Norma Doris Egstrom, in Jamestown, North Dakota, has been in the public eye since her days with the Benny Goodman orchestra. Her varied career has included such hits as the much-covered "Fever" and "Is That All There Is?" Here, she'll be examining the songs of Frank Loesser, among others. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A candlelit basement restaurant within ticket-scalping distance of the Palladium. **PHOEBE LÉGÈRE** is currently in residence. Légère is a trained pianist, cellist, and accordionist; she has a four-octave vocal range and has written an opera. Don't be intimidated, though. She's appeared as a blind blonde in "The Toxic Avenger II" and can play piano with one leg hitched up behind her head. Music at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Sundays and at nine-thirty, eleven-thirty, and one on Fridays and Saturdays.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. **MOSE ALLISON,** a jazz-blues singer and a snappy lyricist, leads a trio here through July 26; and **JUDY NIEMACK** begins a short stint on July 28. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

MARQUEE, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club, just off the West Side Highway, that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. **GODFLESH** is here on July 24, and the **LEVELLERS** and **UNCLE GREEN** share the bill on July 27. Levellers is an English band that plays a topical, Clash-influenced mix of folk and rock. Uncle Green is an Atlanta-based rock band that writes smart, hook-laden rock tunes. They've been together since ninth grade, and they recently released an album titled "Book of Bad Thoughts."

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—An unpretentious back room, where every night is a new-music seminar. Country-rocker **JOE HENRY** is here on July 24; **SEBADOH** claims July 25; and **PAVEMENT** performs July 28-29. Shows are usually at ten on Thursdays, at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays, and at nine other nights.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The club has recently gone Creole: there's a new chef, who's versed in dishes like fried catfish, and the current musical offering is a New Orleans-style jazz band, featuring pianist **TERRY WALDO,** trumpeter **BILL DILLARD,** and clarinettist **ORANGE KELLIN.** Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Closed Sundays.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There, you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here, intimate nineties glitter. The performers compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. "Say It with Music," an Irving Berlin revue, is currently under way. **KAYE BALLARD, LIZ CALLAWAY, JOE COCUZZO, JASON GRAAE, JAY LEONHART, RON RAINES,** and **FRED WELLS** make up the cast. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steak house, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. The Wednesday-night lineup is forever changing. July 22 belongs to Ron Roullier's group and Bob Thosen's big band; on July 29 you can catch Frank Fighera and Slam. Show times vary.

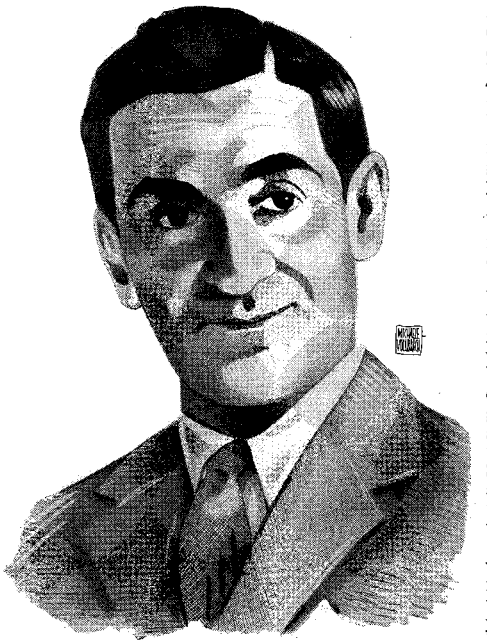
RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—A massive rock club, where the orchestra has been gutted for maximum standing capacity, where you have to wear a hospital-style wristband if you want to drink, and where, if you're bored with the band, you can watch the staff members guarding the stage pass along rowdies like buckets of water at a fire. The **STRAY CATS** perform on July 24. Led by the sideburned Long Islander turned London expatriate Brian Setzer, the Cats were at the forefront of an early-eighties rockabilly revival. The trend was mercifully short-lived, but the group has maintained an on-again, off-again status, and Setzer has filled in the gaps by working as a sideman and releasing a couple of uneven solo records. While the reverent rockabilly act can be a bore, the Stray Cats liven it up with modern touches and topical lyrics, and Setzer's fluid, jazz-tinged guitar work on its own might be worth the price of admission. **PAUL WELLER** is here on July 25. As leader of the Jam, Weller was a punk icon and a half—a brilliant, impassioned singer, songwriter, and guitarist the likes of whom hadn't been seen since the young Pete Townshend. The track record of his subsequent band, the Style Council, is shakier. Weller's stab at suave, jazzy, blue-eyed soul has yielded a few nuggets but a lot of forgettable, meandering jazz-pop. At this show, he can be expected to offer a retrospective of his ever-changing moods. Show times vary.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The closest thing in Manhattan to a rain forest, this venerable club has many selling points: tropical drinks, Brazilian food, faux palm trees, a thatch-roofed bar. The live music is primarily from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean, and the dance floor is usually hopping. Steel-pan man **ANDY NARELL** will perform here July 22-23. Narell was born in New York City and learned his trade from his father, but it was in Trinidad that he really discovered his signature sound. Narell's latest album, "Down the Road," mixes jazz and Afro-Caribbean music, and it's currently climbing the charts. **YOMO TORO** comes in on July 24; **PONCHO SANCHEZ** is here on July 25; and the **ITALS** appear on July 28. Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, from ten-thirty Fridays and Saturdays, and from nine on Mondays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—If you arrive late for a show at this celebrated shrine of jazz, you run the risk of being seated in the glass-enclosed terrace, which means you'll need a periscope to see the show. Otherwise, Sweet Basil is just the right environment for patrons—chiefly because it has a silence-or-else policy during shows. **RALPH PETERSON'S** "fotet," which includes clarinettist **DON BYRON,** works out July 21-26. Lynne Arriale's trio plays on July 27, and **ART FARMER'S** quintet, featuring **CLIFFORD JORDAN,** settles in on July 28. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This wedge-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The **DEWEY REDMAN** quintet is in action July 21-26; a foursome led by **JAY HOGGARD** (the Mayor's vibraphonic son-in-law) gets under way on July 28. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. **BLACK 47,** which will be here on July 24, has had a brief, strange history. The group started out by playing after-hours gigs at an Irish bar downtown. The band consisted of a trombonist, a uilleann-pipes player, and a singer-guitarist who sang strident variations on the Irishman-in-New-York theme. Before long, limousines were lining the avenue outside the bar and the members of Black 47 were being schmoozed by all manner of record-company types. The band recently signed with E.M.I. Also at Wetlands this week: the Machine (July 25), the Skadanks (July 26), and **MIRACLE LEGION** (July 29). Music at ten.



Irving Berlin revue at Rainbow & Stars

BIG BIRD

The Statue of Liberty may stand watch over all of New York Harbor but for the rest of the month Pier 25, in Tribeca, will be guarded by its own private sentry—a forty-foot-tall heron. Standing erect on a barge moored to the pier, its neck craned back and its beak pointed straight up, the huge white bird looks as if it had just stopped to perch in the sun for a few minutes. From a distance, the sculpture looks like an apparition of icy latticework; closer inspection reveals a frame of hand-bent half-inch-round bar steel (total length, four thousand feet; total weight, two tons). Among the heron's outsized features are feet that are four yards long, with claws that weigh nearly ten pounds. The whole affair is held together by a hundred and seventy-five pounds of welding rod.

Built over a seven-month period in 1986-87 by the sculptors Roberto Julio Bessin and Chris Solbert, the heron stood outside Mr. Bessin's home, in Centerport, Long Island, until a few weeks ago, when he floated it to its current berth, in time to meet the Tall Ships on July 4. The sculpture actually began taking shape in the early nineteen-eighties, when Mr. Bessin was living in San Francisco and found himself spending a lot of time contemplating the Bay. "I remember seeing a common egret on a cloudy day, standing on a sandbar, and it seemed a perfect symbol of the waterfront community of animals," he says. As for the heron's vertical pose, he stresses that art is not imitating life. "The pose is very much an artificial gesture. I played with my models, and just found that there's something spiritual to that form."

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EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

IN the four years since its inception, Florent Morellet's annual Bastille Day-in-the-Meat-Market celebration has grown from a clever restaurant promotion into a two-block-long Colonial-Williamsburg-with-a-politically-correct-conscience street fair. At this year's fête, held on the party-filled eve of the Democratic Convention, you could get guillotined, tossed into the clink, or hit on to buy a raffle ticket whose grand prize was a dead goat. (Florent swears it's a Gallic tradition.) A feminist Calypso band played, rappers sang about democracy, drags lectured about AIDS education and brotherhood, a young man wearing more bananas than he had ounces of talent pretended he was Josephine Baker, and row after row of banquet-length tables were jammed with diners being served by waiters dressed as if Patricia Field had opened up an outlet at Versailles. One exuberant young woman ran onstage for an impromptu, exquisitely self-caressing striptease, which got her the hook but undoubtedly also got her a steady job, if any talent scout was there chowing down on cold chicken.

When a reveller exclaimed that the festivities were "what New York's Halloween Parade used to be like before the yahoos took over," Florent blushed more like a schoolgirl getting her first kiss in the Place des Vosges than the tricolored strumpet he was dressed as. The reveller was seconded by one and all, except for the woman behind him, who had just acquired a problem. "I won the goat," she said. "What do I do with it?" When told that she should eat it, the lady admitted she didn't have a clue how to cook the thing. "We'll butcher it for you," said one of Florent's managers. "And then you can pick it up—real soon." "Can it wait a couple of days, until after the Convention?" she asked. Considering that by the end of the week a goat was bound to smell worse than a donkey, the manager replied, "Not really. You've got to freeze it or eat it right away." As the woman walked away, bewildered, one of her friends turned and said, "I thought we were supposed to eat cake."

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

SERIOUS FUN!—Final performances of Lincoln Center's annual survey of nontraditional performing arts and artists. July 21-22: Karen Finley, in her new monologue, "A Certain Level of Denial."... ¶ July 23: John Kelly presents his new work, "Divine Promiscue."... ¶ July 24-25: David Shiner and Bill Irwin put their talents as clowns to use in a brand-new performance piece. With the Red Clay Ramblers.... ¶ July 28: Rose English in "My Mathematics."... ¶ July 29-30: "Megadance," two evenings of choreographic works by Lucinda Childs, Douglas Dunn, Simone Forti, Meredith Monk, Rudy Perez, Yvonne Rainer, Gus Solomons, Jr., Paul Taylor, and James Waring/Elizabeth Walton. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Evenings at 8.)

"MIAUHAUS"—A large installation of visual art works will serve as the backdrop for numerous performance artists, poets, musicians, and dancers. In all, fifty-seven artists are involved. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway. The exhibition starts July 20, with an opening bash on July 22. For a schedule of performances, call 966-9520.)

ART

TRYING to make distinctions between art and craft or high and low has its perils. But the Louis Kahn retrospective at MOMA (through August 18), augustly subtitled "In the Realm of Architecture," got us thinking in those terms. The exhibition's burden, which was nowhere made explicit, seemed to be the question of what it was that transformed Kahn's middling-good modern-architecture practice into a remarkable mission. Kahn's late works, from the sixties and early seventies—including institutional buildings in India and Bangladesh; the Salk Institute, in La Jolla, California; the Kimbell Art Museum, in Fort Worth, Texas; and the library at Phillips Exeter Academy, in New Hampshire—are glorious edifices that radiate a sense of passionate purpose. Grant Mudford's photographs are beautiful and rigorous enough to do justice to these masterworks, and they almost make the case for the show on their own.

Until about 1950, when Kahn was middle-aged (he died in 1974), all he had produced were decent buildings, mostly in a skimpy-looking modernist vein, that to this day seem to reek of ur-socialist programs and bland notions of functional living. Kahn's extraordinary transition from the correct to the transcendent is first apparent in the plain but definitely classy Yale University Art Gallery (1951-53). He obtained this commission while on sabbatical at the American Academy in Rome, during which he travelled and made sketches of Classical buildings and statuary. Soon afterward, even his scale models assumed an ancient glow. Arata Isozaki's installation, which was based on an unrealized Kahn proposal for a synagogue, has a similarly hallowed tone. This resolutely noncritical show might prompt you to reëvaluate all sorts of hocus-pocus about creative awakenings, without ever causing you to address the evidence at hand. A huge new Kahn tome by David Brownlee and David De Long, however, with an introduction by Vincent Scully, could provide you with some useful clues.

Photographer Martin Parr

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain" includes more than a hundred works of art, from a wood ceiling to a mosaic dado to an ivory coffin. Through Sept. 27.... ¶ The recent donation of the Perls collection—a hundred and sixty-three objects from the kingdom of Benin—has substantially redefined the museum's African holdings. This exhibition of the collection is a welcome relief from the rigid theatre of many of the museum's blockbusters: it enables viewers to make their own discoveries. Through Sept. 13.... ¶ "Modern Design: 1890-1990" shows off the museum's holdings in twentieth-century furniture, architectural and design drawings, glass, ceramics, and other objects.... **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden, planted with eight sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"The Young Rebel in American Photography, 1950-1970" presents work by, among others, Diane Arbus, Larry Clark, Bruce Davidson, Robert Frank, and Lee Friedlander. Starts July 23.... ¶ "Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture." This retrospective of the American architect's work includes about three hundred drawings, sketches, models, and photographs. Through Aug. 18.... ¶ "Antoni Tàpies in Print" presents more than a hundred lithographs, intaglio prints, and illustrated books, from the forties to the present, by the Catalan artist. Through Aug. 9.... ¶ Twenty-four paintings, drawings, and prints by Philip Guston. Through July 26.... ¶ Eighty magazine-and-newspaper photo-collages by Stephen Kroninger, displayed alongside the versions that appeared in *Time*, the *Village Voice*, *Rolling Stone*, and elsewhere. Through Aug. 9.... ¶ Erika Rothenberg's "House of Cards" installation features nearly a hundred fake greeting cards dealing with social, political, and racial issues. Through Aug. 25.... ¶ A small, pleasant exhibition of the Finnish designer Kaj Franck's gloriously spare designs. Particularly impressive is his Kilta tableware, which was in production from 1953 to 1975 and still looks contemporary. Its finely tuned colors, in such contrasting shades as deep aqua green and chartreuse, seem like refined versions of our own Fiestaware. Through Oct. 12.... **NOTE:** The museum's sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, on Fridays and Saturdays from 6 to 10, with musicians from the Juilliard School performing at 7:30. This summer's program is dedicated to the music of John Cage. (The museum is open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Masterpieces from the Guggenheim Collection" is on view, along with Dan Flavin's fluorescent-light installation, "Untitled (to Tracy, to celebrate the love of a lifetime)." Through Aug. 27. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge on Tuesdays from 5 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—"From Brancusi to Bourgeois" includes, as well, Kandinsky, Andre, Ryman, and Beuys. Through Aug. 27. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings until 10.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—An exhibition of landscapes, seascapes, portraits, and boxing scenes by painter and lithographer George Bellows (1882-1925). Through Aug. 30.... ¶ The second part of a show of recent additions to the museum's collection; more than seventy paintings and sculptures are included. Through Aug. 23. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"Painters of a New Century: The Eight & American Art," an exhibition devoted to the work of the turn-of-the-century painters known as the Eight: Arthur B. Davies, William Glackens, Robert Henri, Ernest Lawson, George Luks, Maurice Prendergast, Everett Shinn, and John Sloan.... ¶ Complementing "The Eight" show is a smaller display of prints, drawings, watercolors, and pastels by these same artists, as well as by George Bellows, Jerome Myers, and Walt Kuhn.... ¶ "Tacit Transit," a new installation, by Korean-born artist Jin Soo

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ART–Cont'd

Kim, that consists of wire-mesh modules and found objects. Through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ A display of first-edition etchings from Giovanni Battista Piranesi's "Carceri d'Invenzioni" group. Through July 26. . . . ¶ "Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—A show that documents several stages in the design of Frank Gehry's new bentwood furniture (several models of which were seen a few months ago at MOMA). Included are original drawings, prototypes, production models, photo-murals, and a history of bentwood furniture. Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ "A Decade of Craft" highlights works in glass and wood that the museum has recently acquired. Through July 26. . . . ¶ Three site-specific installations by Sam Gilliam, Robert Kushner, and Dale Chihuly. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, except July 4, 10 to 5.)

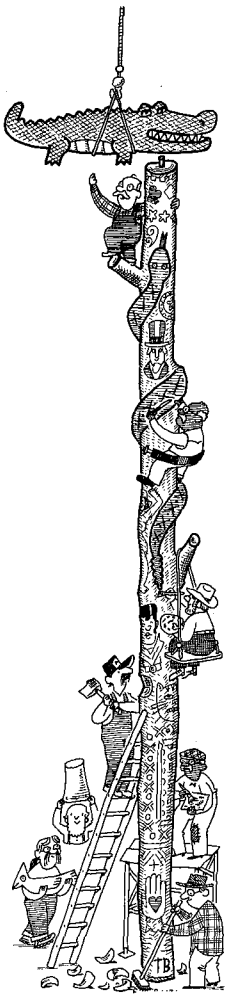
Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—Eight paintings from the "North American Trophy Room" series, by Honduran artist Francisco Alvarado-Juárez. Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ The museum's twelfth "Artist in the Marketplace" exhibition includes thirty-six emerging painters, sculptors, photographers, and installation artists. Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ "Contemporary Painting and Calligraphy from Japan." Through Aug. 2. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Since its founding, in 1897, by the three Hewitt sisters, whose goal was to elevate taste in America, the Cooper-Hewitt has accumulated a marvellous albeit rarely displayed library of the decorative arts. On view since last summer, "A Design Resource" is a rotating sampler of nearly a thousand objects drawn from the museum's collection. "Animals in Design" and "Designs for Seating" are among the new sections. Through Aug. 30. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"An Album of Interiors" consists of more than sixty nineteenth-century watercolors, from two private family collections—one American and one European. Through Aug. 23. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays 1 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Sketching at Home and Abroad" presents more than a hundred British landscape drawings and watercolors—from the literal to the lyrical—by Turner, Constable, Wilson, Gainsborough, and others. Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ Puss in Boots, the Master Cat, is the subject of an exhibition that spans three hundred years' worth of illustrations, beginning with Charles Perrault's original manuscript of Mother Goose stories. Through Aug. 9. . . . ¶ "Leaping the Fence" is an exhibition that examines, through illustrated treatises, the development of the English landscape garden. Through Aug. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5, Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"The Art of Embellishment" features fifty painted and stencilled objects—doors, pieces of furniture, tinware, and textiles—from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American homes. Through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ The American hand-carved walking stick (more varieties than you can shake one at) is the subject of "Step Lively: The Art of the Folk Cane." Through Sept. 13. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)



"Step Lively: The Art of the Folk Cane" at the Museum of American Folk Art

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"St. Petersburg as It Was Leningrad" features forty lithographs by the Russian graphic artist Anatoly Kaplan (1902-1980). Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ "Walt Whitman and New York." The Long Island-born Brooklynite is celebrated in a show that juxtaposes prose and poetry with nineteenth-century paintings, prints, and photographs. Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ "Broadway! 125 Years of Musical Theatre." A large assortment of objects—including paintings, posters, scripts, models, sheet music, and memorabilia—from nearly seventy-five productions that have bowed on the Great White Way. First seen in New York last summer at the IBM Gallery. . . . ¶ An exhibition of fifty paintings, watercolors, and lithographs by the Dutch artist Adriaan Lubbers (1892-1954), whose fascination with New York City is reflected in his urban landscapes. Through July 26. . . . ¶ Two shows of New York images. "Empire City," an exhibition of all the paintings and drawings in the Robert R. Preato collection, features work by George Luks, Abraham Walkowitz, and Theresa Bernstein. "Recent Gifts: Works on Paper" is a display of woodcuts, lithographs, etchings, drawings, and watercolors from the thirties to the eighties. Among the etchings are a group of thirteen made between 1927 and 1930 by the Social Realist Philip Reisman (1904-92). Both shows through Aug. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A hundred and twenty-four prints, drawings, and watercolors by the German artist Lovis Corinth (1858-1925). Through Sept. 13. . . . ¶ "Masterworks of American Impressionism from the Pfeil Collection" features eighty-seven paintings, by such artists as Mary Cassatt, Childe Hassam, Lila Cabot Perry, and John Twachtman. Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ "The Artist's Eye," the first in a series of exhibitions to be curated by artists who are academy members. Philip Pearlstein has done the selecting here; among the forty works on view are Ryder's "Marine" and Sargent's "Portrait of Monet." Through Sept. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Ansel Adams: The Early Years" covers the years 1919 to 1941 and includes, along with several of the famous Western landscapes, lesser-known still-lifes, portraits, and views of New York City. Through Oct. 11. . . . ¶ If you can't shake Convention fever, take a stroll through "Party Time: Presidential Campaigns Since 1832," a large gathering of glorious political artifacts. Admission is free to Democratic National Convention delegates. Through Sept. 20. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"In Life or Death Forever," a comprehensive show commemorating the centenary of Walt Whitman's death, includes a hundred and fifty manuscripts, books, photographs, and letters culled from both the Berg and Oscar Lion collections. Through Sept. 12. (Berg Exhibition Room.). . . ¶ The forays of Percy Bysshe Shelley into the political arena are chronicled in the letters, manuscripts, and bank checks on view in "Shelley: Unacknowledged Legislator." Through Aug. 8. (Edna Barnes Salomon Room.). . . ¶ "On the Edge" is an exhibition of more than two hundred black-and-white and color photographs from the covers and pages of *Vogue.* Through Aug. 1. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.) (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—Noguchi (1904-88) designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his own sculptures. The entire range of his work is on view, from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures through several types of stone carvings, and including documentation of his prodigious public-art projects. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful, ivy-walled garden dotted with sculptures. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—"Colombia: Contemporary Images," an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by thirty-five native Colombians. Through Sept. 13. . . . ¶ Drawings and distorted silhouettes by Brazilian installation artist Regina Silveira. Through Sept. 13. (A concurrent show of Silveira's work is at LedisFlam, 584 Broadway, through Aug. 7. Closed Mondays.) (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—An exhibition of a dozen large-scale paintings and a dozen works on paper by William T. Williams. Through Nov. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Ron Janowich / Frederic Thursz—Janowich has lately been playing with the shape of his canvases, and this experimentation seems to be paying off. The most interesting work is shaped like a horseshoe, a form that neatly fills one's field of vision. / Thursz has covered several panels in thick, glossy paint; according to a nearby statement, the works were inspired by the death, at Dachau, of an uncle he'd met only once. A group of larger panels, displayed in a smaller gallery, are gripping. They're arranged in pairs of similar colors—two mustards, two purples—and they make for a poignant study in the dynamics of attraction. Through July 31. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—William Garbe, McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through July 31); **William King,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through July 31).

GALLERIES—SoHo

David Carrino / "Les Enfants Terribles"—The artist has cut words out of large pieces of honey-colored silk and then sewn them back together so that the material puckers around the letters, forming bas-relief canvases. The words "kingdom," "mad," and "fling" stand out, and, although the works may appear somewhat gimmicky, there is something disturbing and lyrical about their simplicity. / A very interesting show about precociousness and childhood sexuality. The best work here happens to be by the most well-known artists. Christian Boltanski has attempted to recapture childhood with a clay refabrication of a paper airplane he made when he was five, while Robert Mapplethorpe is represented by a box construction (rather reminiscent of Cornell), made when he was in his early twenties, that embodies several issues that would later drive him as an artist. It's a figure of a child with two pairs of hands reaching out—a gesture of openness but also a plea. Also on display is a girl's red shoe made of wax, by Robert Gober, a melancholy work that attempts to protest fixed gender roles while at the same time confirming them. A more ominous note is struck by two of Lewis Carroll's photographs of Alice Liddell, whom he portrayed, in all her girlish innocence, as an object of sexual desire. Through Aug. 1. (Wooster Gardens, 40 Wooster St. Closed Mondays.)

"Paper"—Works by several artists whose principal medium is paper have been selected by Kiki Smith, whose own recent show at this gallery demonstrated her mastery of this medium. There is an eccentric relationship between these mostly unknown artists, making this a refreshingly personal gathering rather than a definitive curatorial affair. The most engaging works are those by Lesley Dill. Her "poem shirt" consists of paper letters hanging high up on a wall in a spill of partially readable words, giving a sense of the fragility of speech, while her "poem dress," which is more readable, speaks of alienation. Through Aug. 15. (Fawbush, 76 Grand St. Closed Mondays.)

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"TROUBLE OVER SO MUCH SKIN"—This is a very funny show that aims to render ridiculous the current uproar over sexually explicit art. The work is neither erotic nor pornographic, but instead has a kind of enlightened barnyard matter-of-factness about sex. John Lekay has been causing a minor sensation lately, and his "Ring a Ring of Roses" is the most conspicuous work on view—a daisy-chain orgy of inflatable women with strap-on dildos. Another Lekay piece is more economical, and more absurd: a lone basketball with a black dildo strapped onto it. Elsewhere are G.B. Jones' lesbian drawings, whose style has been appropriated from Tom of Finland, and Richard Hawkins' collages of mostly gay-porn skin shots on top of pages from art magazines showing viscous paintings by members of the contemporary male canon: Polke, Kiefer, Schnabel, and Bleckner. Through Aug. 7. (Feature, 484 Broome St. Closed Mondays.)

GROUP SHOWS—At A/D, 560 Broadway: A room appointed by three artists. Roy Lichtenstein's wallpaper with a living-room image is as lustreless as his recent paintings. But Gerhard Richter's colorfully gridded wall-to-wall carpeting would do any rec room proud. On the carpet sit four of Donald Judd's gorgeous plywood chairs, which have the design simplicity of Shaker furniture. Through July 31. (Closed Mondays.). . . BAER, 476 Broome St.: Hidden in this miscellany of mildly engaging work is an American flag by Andrew Krasnow. It is made of human skin—some of it the artist's own—dyed red, white, and blue. The flag is not as ghoulish as one might expect—it looks more like shiny leather than skin—but it is still rather sensationalistic. Ultimately, though, it seems pointless—a far cry from the self-mutilation of early-seventies body art, which was at least rooted in a sense of protest. Through July 24. (Closed Mondays.). . . THEODORE, 580 Broadway: A show of works by some interesting young artists. Though the link does not seem intentional, these artists are concerned, to various degrees, with confrontation. The fiercest work is that by Jackie McAllister—striped paintings, made of Lego blocks, that represent two opposing Italian soccer teams and that, in the spirit of LeWitt and Buren, use the minimalist language to create a novel image of aggression and ritual combat. More lyrical are works by Gavin Brown—Polaroids of a burning trash can, and a stack of dance records, primarily by black performers, along with a turntable for playing them. Through July 31. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays.)

SHORT LIST—CARL ANDRE, Pretto, 103 Sullivan St. (opens at noon, closed Mondays, through July 31); DAN FLAVIN, RubinSpangle, 395 West Broadway (closed Mondays, through July 31); VIOLA FREY, Hoffman, 429 West Broadway (through July 31); GUERCINO, The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. (closed Mondays, open Saturdays, and Wednesdays until 8; through Aug. 1); KWONG LUM, Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St. (through July 31); LISA MACKIE and JOANNE MC FARLAND, Kelly, 591 Broadway (through July 31); DAVID RABINOWITCH, Flynn, 113 Crosby St. (through Oct. 31); REGINA SILVEIRA, Ledis-Flam, 584 Broadway (closed Mondays, through Aug. 7).

OTHER VENUES

"ART IN THE ANCHORAGE"—Creative Time has mounted its ninth annual summer salon in the vaults of the Brooklyn Bridge. On view are six installations, by Helene Aylon, Gretchen Bender, Mildred Howard, Seiko Mikami, the Women's Action Coalition, and Liz Young; a continuous slide presentation of works by photographers Nina Kuo, Dona McAdams, Marilyn Nance, and Lynda Rodolitz; and a memorial exhibition of works by furniture designer and graphic artist Don Ruddy. Several readings, panel discussions, and performances are also scheduled at various times during the run of the show. Through Sept. 20. (Cadman Plaza West at Front St., Brooklyn. Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

"CROSS SECTION"—Battery Park City has been transformed into one huge indoor-and-outdoor sculpture park for this show of seventy-five contemporary works, which are on loan from nineteen New York City museums. Among the sixty-five artists represented are Viola Frey, Nam June Paik, Alfredo Jaar, Louise Bourgeois, Christian Marclay, Isamu Noguchi, and Faith Ringgold. Through Sept. 20. (Battery Park City and World Financial Center. Exhibition guides are available at kiosks throughout the area.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

A PERENNIAL American type is being explored in an exhibition that opens this week (on July 23) at the Museum of Modern Art: "The Young Rebel in American Photography, 1950-70." In photography no less than in movies and literature, new images of the rebel seem to arise with every generation, and they exert enormous influence on popular culture. This exhibition features photographs that affect our sense of what rebels are going through by giving us specific notions of what they look like. Some of the images will probably seem innocent by today's standards—such as Bruce Davidson's photographs of a gang of teen-agers whose symbols of rebellion are cigarettes and beer. But there are also tougher pictures, such as Larry Clark's 1971 photographs of kids shooting up—images that make us shiver every time we see them.

A lot has happened since these photographs were taken. Some of the actions depicted here have been trivialized by politically minded slogans—"Just Say No" and all that. Other activities, like cross-dressing, have reëmerged as mainstream spectacle. (The last feeling you have about one of the Arbus photographs in this exhibition, of a transvestite sitting on a bed, is anything like society's acceptance of him.)

The curator responsible for "The Young Rebel in American Photography" is twenty-four-year-old Edward Robinson, the current Newhall Fellow in the department of photography at MOMA. We asked him why he chose this theme, and he said, "I was interested in seeing what we had here in the permanent collection, and discovered that there was much more than just sand-dune pictures. The rebel that shows up in these photographs doesn't exist anymore. Now that the image has become a part of high fashion—motorcycle outfits, say—the cultural icon is no longer a charged figure. We have to search in new places to find new appearances of the authentic rebel. The rebel is a figure that can never become acceptable. As I worked on this show, I thought about whether it is in fact possible to be a rebel today. And, if so, who is one?"

Are you? we asked Robinson. "No," he answered, "I'm a conformist." A tuned-in one, then.

"AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHS: TRADITIONAL THEMES BY CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHERS"—Works by Lynn Davis, Sally Mann, Robert Mapplethorpe, Richard Misrach, Annie Leibovitz, and Bruce Weber. Through Aug. 14. (Danziger, 415 West Broadway. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

SHORT LIST—BILL BRANDT and AART KLEIN, Lowinsky, 575 Broadway (closed Mondays, through July 24); LINDA BUTLER, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (closed Mondays, through Aug. 21); BEVAN DAVIES, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (closed Mondays, through July 31); ARTHUR MONES, McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through July 31); EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (closed Mondays, through Aug. 13); MARTIN PARR, Borden, 560 Broadway (closed Mondays, through July 31); MAGGIE STEBER, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. (closed Mondays, through Aug. 1); TODD WEBB, Houk Friedman, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. (closed Mondays, through Aug. 28).

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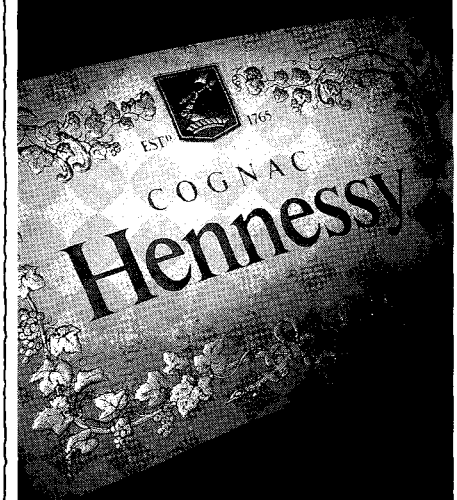

JULY 31st *through*

AUGUST 8th

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MUSIC

BY the time the Metropolitan Opera's season starts, in September, only the well-connected or the very lucky can actually acquire tickets to the performances that are worth hearing. So after a Met brochure arrived in the mail recently, we called the box office to find out what a new subscription buyer might order in midsummer with any hope of success.

The helpful staff at the opera house advised us that in eleven of the twenty-six full-subscription packages, and in all but one of the twenty-two "mini-subscriptions," there are enough openings in the largest seating areas (Orchestra and Family Circle) to make both reasonably safe bets. Scrutinizing the cast lists in the light of our particular tastes, handicapping the choices for the likelihood of singers' cancellations, weighing the possibly great nights against the almost certainly dismal nights in each available grouping, we came up with a few recommendations. If we were looking for a full subscription this year, we'd aim for the ones listed as Tuesday 3 or Wednesday 5, or both. The former gives you Richard Leech in "Ballo," Luciano Pavarotti in "Tosca," Mirella Freni in "Onegin," a new production of "Meistersinger," and the best-cast "Walküre" of the season. Wednesday 5 also has Mr. Leech, plus the new Philip Glass opera "The Voyage," a potentially hot soprano in "Lucia," and the potentially sizzling combination of Teresa Stratas and Vladimir Atlantov in "Pagliacci." A strong contender for the tradition-minded is Thursday 3, with Diana Soviero as Butterfly and Nedda, as well as Placido Domingo as Hoffmann and Canio. And Friday 2 offers a very promising "Falstaff" revival, the "Voyage," and a strong "Jenůfa." The available "mini-series" we liked best was Wednesday E, a bel-canto-oriented foursome with a reasonable guarantee of (among other things) tolerable tenor singing.

The ticket subscription line at the Met is 362-6000; they'll be glad to send information about the season to those who want to pick through the maze for themselves.

IN TOWN—OPERA

New York City Opera—**110 in the shade,** a musical by Harvey Schmidt, to a libretto by Tom Jones (based on N. Richard Nash's 1953 play "The Rainmaker"), in a new production, with Karen Ziémba, Brian Sutherland, Richard Muenz, and Henderson Forsythe; conducted by Paul Gemignani. (July 21 at 8 and July 25 at 1:30.)... **la traviata,** with Gail Dobish, Michael Rees Davis, and Victor Ledbetter; Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (July 22 and July 25 at 8.)... **cavalleria rusticana** and **pagliacci,** in a double bill, conducted by Steven Sloane; with RoseMarie Freni, Craig Sirianni, and Edward Huls in the former, and Christiane Riel, Vincenzo Scuderi, and Sigmund Cowan in the latter. (July 24 at 8.)... **la bohème,** with Elizabeth Hynes, Patricia Racette, Martin Thompson, and Jeffrey Kneebone; Mark Gibson. (July 26 at 1:30 and July 29 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

New York Grand Opera—Vincent La Selva conducts staged performances. July 22 at 7:30: "Madame Butterfly."... ¶ July 29 at 7:30: Verdi's "Stiffelio," composed in 1850, immediately preceding "Rigoletto," and recounting the travails of a Lutheran pastor with an unfaithful wife. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary.)

Magic Circle Opera Repertory Ensemble—Presenting seven chamber operas, fully staged, in repertory. In addition to the works cited here, every performance also includes one installment of "A Gypsy Carmen," a five-part serial setting employing Bizet's "Carmen" score, but with original dialogue and flamenco choreography added to recast the tale from the gypsy's point of view. July 24 at 8: Ned Rorem's "A Childhood Miracle" and Kenneth K. Guilmartin's "The City of Gypsies."... ¶ July 25 at 8: Joelle Wallach's "The King's Twelve Moons" and Mr. Guilmartin's "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" (both premières).... ¶ July 26 at 7:30: "A Childhood Miracle," Barber's "A Hand of Bridge," and Holst's "The Wandering Scholar."... ¶ July 27 at 7:30: "A Hand of Bridge" and "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell."... ¶ July 28 at 7:30: "The King's Twelve Moons" and "The Wandering Scholar."... ¶ July 29 at 7:30: "A Childhood Miracle" and "The City of Gypsies." (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. For information about tickets, call 279-4200.)

Amato Opera Company—A program of operatic highlights to celebrate the forty-fifth anniversary of this intrepid opera company; featuring singers currently on the Amato roster as well as "alumni." (Amato Opera Theatre, 315 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. July 25 at 7:30 and July 26 at 2:30.)

IN TOWN—CONCERTS

Mostly Mozart Festival—July 20: The Emerson String Quartet plays quartets by Beethoven (Op. 59, No. 3) and Schubert (in A Minor, D. 804); André Previn joins members of the ensemble in Mozart's E-Flat-Major Piano Quartet.... **note:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticketholders, the same musicians will perform Schubert's C-Minor "Quartettsatz" and Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet.... ¶ July 21-22: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Bach's First "Brandenburg" Concerto and Mozart's Symphony No. 39, Cassation in B-Flat (K. 99), and C-Minor Piano Concerto (with André Watts).... **note:** In pre-concert recitals, beginning both evenings at 7 and open to ticketholders, pianist Pedja Muzijevic will perform works by Galuppi and Chopin.... ¶ July 23: Joshua Rifkin leads the period-instrument Bach Ensemble in an all-Bach concert comprising the B-Minor Orchestral Suite (featuring flutist Christopher Krueger), the Concerto for Oboe and Violin (with oboist Stephen Hammer and violinist Linda Quan), the Fifth "Brandenburg" Concerto (with Mr. Rifkin himself at the harpsichord), and the Cantata No. 202 ("Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten"), featuring soprano Benita Valente.... **note:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticketholders, members of the ensemble will play chamber music by Telemann and C.P.E. Bach.... ¶ July 24-25: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Beethoven's Symphony No. 4, Haydn's D-Major Cello Concerto (with Lynn Harrell), and Mozart's Symphony No. 21 and Piano Concerto in D Major (K. 451, featuring Rudolf Firkušný).... **note:** In pre-concert recitals, beginning both nights at 7 and open to ticketholders, Messrs. Harrell and Firkušný will play Beethoven's G-Minor Cello Sonata (Op. 5, No. 2).... ¶ July 27: Works by Mozart, Schubert (his "Trout" Quintet), and Mendelssohn, through the offices of the Mendelssohn String Quartet, plus friends.... **note:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticketholders, pianist Lilian Kallir will perform music by Haydn and Mendelssohn (his "Variations Sérieuses").... ¶ July 28-29: Christoph Eschenbach conducts the Mostly Mozart Symphony Orchestra in two symphonies by Mozart (including the "Prague"), arias by Mozart and Strauss (with soprano Cyndia Sieden), and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 (in which the conductor will double as soloist). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Evenings at 8.)

Organ Recitals—At Riverside Church. July 21 at 7: Eileen Hunt.... ¶ July 28 at 7: Yang Sook Hwang. (Riverside Dr. at 120th St. Admission by contribution.)

Bargemusic—Presenting a Handel trio sonata as well as piano quintets by Schumann and Shostakovich. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. July 23 at 7:30, July 24 at 8, and July 26 at 4. The July 24 concert is a benefit, by candlelight.)

Ilana Vered at Rutgers SummerFest

Goldman Memorial Band—Gene Young conducts music by Berlioz, Percy Grainger, Robert Ward, and others. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 24 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Summergarden at MOMA—Singer Cheryl Marshall and pianists Michael Torre and Pedja Muzijevic perform music by John Cage. (Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, 14 W. 54th St. July 24-25 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Wong On-yuen—*Some call him "the Paganini* of Chinese Hu-ch'in," while others insist that he's "the King of the Erh-hu." Both positions are compatible, though, since "hu-ch'in" refers to an entire family of Chinese bowed string instruments, of which the erh-hu is the two-stringed, mezzo-soprano member. Mr. Wong will perform on the erh-hu and several of its hu-ch'in cousins. (Taipei Theatre, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 48th St. 373-1850. July 24-25 at 7:30 and July 26 at 2.)

Bronx Arts Ensemble—Johannes Somary conducts works by André Caplet and Arthur Bird, plus one of his own. (Rockwood Drive Circle, Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. July 26 at 2.... ¶ McGinley Center, Fordham University, the Bronx. July 26 at 4. No tickets necessary for either concert. For information, call 1-718 549-1899.)

OUT OF TOWN

Glimmerglass Opera—**il matrimonio segreto,** Cimarosa's rollicking comedy about eighteenth-century family values, in a production (with supertitles) by Jonathan Miller. (July 20 and July 29 at 2:30, and July 24 at 8.)... **die zauberflöte,** in a production (with supertitles) by Martha Clarke, conducted by Richard Bradshaw. (July 23 at 7:30 and July 26 at 2.)... **the turn of the screw,** Britten's masterpiece of moral ambiguity, in a production by Mark Lamos, conducted by Stewart Robertson. (July 25 at 8 and July 27 at 2:30.) (Cooperstown, N.Y. For information about tickets, call 1-607 547-2255.)

Tanglewood—July 21 at 8:30: John Williams conducts the Boston Pops.... ¶ July 22 at 8:30: Baritone Sanford Sylvan and pianist David Breitman perform an all-Schubert program, including his song cycle "Die Schöne Müllerin."... ¶ July 23 at 8:30: Gunther Schuller conducts the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in Strauss' "Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks" and his own "Concerto for Piano, Three Hands" (featuring Leon Fleisher and Lorin Hollander).... ¶ July 24 at 9: A screening of Sergei Eisenstein's film "Alexander Nevsky," with Prokofiev's musical accompaniment rendered by the Boston Symphony, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and mezzo-soprano soloist Janis Taylor, all conducted by Seiji Ozawa.... **note:** In a pre-performance recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticketholders, pianist Robert Spano joins members of the orchestra in chamber music by Mozart and Ravel.... ¶ July 25 at 8:30: Robert Spano conducts the Boston Symphony in Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin" and Beethoven's Symphony No. 2; pianist Emanuel Ax will appear as the soloist in Mozart's A-Major Rondo (K. 386) and

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Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 1. . . . ¶ July 26 at 2:30: Dennis Russell Davies conducts the Boston Symphony in Ravel's "La Valse," Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-Flat (K. 482, with Alicia de Larrocha), and Beethoven's incidental music for "The Ruins of Athens" (with soprano Jayne West, bass Brian Matthews, and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus). . . . ¶ July 27 at 8:30: The opening concert of this year's Tanglewood contemporary-music festival spotlights works by James Primosch, Stephen Jaffe, Berthold Tuercke, Osvaldo Golijov, and Scott Lindroth. . . . ¶ July 28 at 8:30: Works by Frederic Rzewski, Roger Reynolds, Art Jarvinen, Rand Steiger, and Morton Subotnick. . . . ¶ July 29 at 8:30: Works by Stephen Hartke, John Corigliano, Christopher Rouse, Yehudi Wyner, Fred Lerdahl, and Esa-Pekka Salonen (who is better known as the Finnish music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.) (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

Rutgers SummerFest—Final concerts of the season. July 22: Born in Transylvania, in 1887, Nicolae Bretan established his reputation as an opera singer (a baritone) and stage director in his native Romania before gaining distinction as a composer. His half-dozen one-act operas, written in the nineteen-twenties and thirties, marked him as one of his country's most important composers. But he ran afoul of Romania's Communist regime, which banned his works and officially relegated him to the status of a non-person, ensuring that his death (which occurred in 1968) would be preceded by oblivion. Their fiat proved effective and enduring: you won't even find Bretan's name in the New Grove. Tenor Frederick Urrey and pianist Martin Berkofsky will perform six of his lieder (to German texts by Heine and Lenau), as well as Beethoven's cycle, "An die Ferne Geliebte." Also on the program is Beethoven's F-Major Quartet (Op. 59, No. 1), played by the Amabile String Quartet. . . . **NOTE:** Mr. Berkofsky will play an all-Liszt pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticketholders. . . . ¶ July 23: The Sylvan Winds play music by Eastern European composers, including Janáček, Ligeti, and Shostakovich. . . . ¶ July 24: Ilana Vered begins her traversal of Beethoven's five piano concertos with the last of them, the "Emperor," assisted by the Festival Orchestra, conducted by Robert Kapilow. Also on the program are works by Cherubini and Joseph Woelfl (his "Le Calme" Piano Concerto, in which Gregg Pauley will appear as soloist). . . . **NOTE:** Mr. Kapilow will present a free pre-concert lecture at 6:30. . . . ¶ July 25: Beethoven's Piano Concertos No. 1 and No. 3, featuring Ms. Vered, and with Robert Kapilow conducting. . . . ¶ **NOTE:** Mr. Kapilow will present a free pre-concert lecture at 6:30. . . . ¶ July 26: Beethoven's Piano Concertos No. 2 and No. 4 (with Ms. Vered) and Violin Concerto (with Hiroko Yajima), with Robert Kapilow conducting. . . . **NOTE:** Mr. Kapilow will present a free pre-concert lecture at 5. (Nicholas Music Center, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. Evenings at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-908 932-7511.)

Dave Frishberg in "Jazz in July"

Caramoor Music Festival—July 23 at 4:15: The St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble performs Mozart's Horn Quintet and sextets by Brahms (in B-Flat, Op. 18) and Peter Schickele. . . . ¶ July 24 at 8:30: Classical guitarist Eliot Fisk and violist Louise Schulman join the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble in an all-Vivaldi program. . . . ¶ July 25 at 8:30: André Previn conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in Copland's "Appalachian Spring," Beethoven's Symphony No. 4, and Barber's Violin Concerto (with Elmar Oliveira). . . . ¶ July 26 at 5:30: Mr. Oliveira, Mr. Previn (playing piano), and cellist Carter Brey include on their program trios by Beethoven (the "Archduke") and Ned Rorem. (Katonah, N.Y. For information about tickets, call 1-914 232-1252.)

Aston Magna Festival—Works by Purcell, including a concert performance of his "Dido and Aeneas." (Bard College, Annandale-on Hudson. July 24 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-914 758-7425. . . . ¶ St. James Church, Great Barrington, Mass. July 25 at 6. For information about tickets, call 1-413 528-3595.)

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival—July 24: A program in which the cellist Janos Starker will appear as unaccompanied soloist (in Cassado's "Suite for Solo Cello"), in chamber music (in Mendelssohn's D-Minor Trio), and as concerto soloist (in Haydn's D-Major Concerto, in which his fellow-cellist Aldo Parisot will lead a chamber orchestra). . . . ¶ July 25: Songs and chamber music, mostly from nineteenth-century Italy. (Route 44, Norfolk, Conn. Evenings at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 1-203 542-5537.)

Waterloo Festival Orchestra—Yoav Talmi conducts Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet," Respighi's "The Pines of Rome," Vieuxtemps's Violin Concerto No. 5 (with Alyssa Park), and Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Boris Berman). (Waterloo Village, Stanhope, N.J. July 25 at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 1-201 347-4700.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Bruce Springsteen—Springsteen's new records, "Human Touch" and "Lucky Town," may only have gone single platinum, but as followups to the brilliant, sobering "Tunnel of Love," they hold their own. And the fact that these eleven shows sold out in less than a day proves that his fans haven't abandoned him. But what about his live shows? While many fans believe the real divorce in Springsteen's life was between him and Clarence Clemons, he's had the foresight to hang on to the Professor, Roy Bittan, on keyboards, whose musical signature is as strong as Clemons' horn. The new group also features Shane Fontayne on guitar, drummer Zachary Alford (you might have seen him on the B-52's last tour), and bassist Tommy Simms. They have some large shoes to fill. The E Street Band was a swinging one-of-a-kind rock band. The atmosphere they created around their boss, a mixture of professionalism and spontaneity, probably won't be recaptured. But Springsteen's good cheer and undeniable talent guarantee a certain level of joyful noise. Show a little faith. . . . (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. July 23, July 25-26, and July 28 at 7:30. Through Aug. 10.)

Lisa Stansfield—The pageboy haircut and the Dippity-do spit curl are gone, and the planes of her lovely face are now framed by an elegantly tousled hair style. Lisa Stansfield's second album, "Real Love," is just as much of a relief as her new look. The hits from her first album, "Affection," were inspired tributes to Barry White and other masters of pulsing seventies love music, but Stansfield and her production team of Ian Devaney and Andy Morris have emerged from others' shadows to present a consummate blue-eyed-soul singer, a mature interpretive artist who has found her own identity. "All Woman," the new hit single, is a confident, bittersweet feminist plaint, and "Time to Make You Mine"—both the song and the video—gives Madonna and Prince a run for their money in the lubricious-pop sweepstakes. On this tour, no special effects are required: the voice can carry the show. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. July 23 at 8.)

Gipsy Kings—Radio City Music Hall. July 21 at 8.

The Cure—With Cranes. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. July 23 at 8.)

Spyro Gyra—Pier 16, South Street Seaport, East River at Fulton St. July 23 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.

Santana—Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. July 24 at 8.

Weir & Wasserman/Michelle Shocked/Bruce Cockburn—Meadowlands Summerfest. 1-201 935-3900. July 24 at 8.

Nona Hendryx—With Darlene Love and Lani Groves. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 25 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Tommy Dorsey Orchestra—Pier 16, South Street Seaport. July 25 at 8. No tickets necessary.

Emerson, Lake and Palmer—Jones Beach Theatre. July 25 at 8.

Judy Mowatt—With Aster Aweke. (Central Park SummerStage. July 26 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Coffee Club Orchestra—Presenting excerpts from "Oklahoma!," "Carousel," and other musicals. Rob Fisher conducts. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. July 26 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

"Jazz in July"—The 92nd Street Y's eighth annual festival, which runs through July 30. July 21: Margaret Whiting and Walt Levinsky and the Great American Swing Band, featuring Dick Hyman. Jonathan Schwartz provides commentary. . . . ¶ July 22: Marian McPartland, Bill Charlap, Jay Leonhart, Dennis Macrell, and Mr. Hyman. . . . ¶ July 23: Mr. Hyman, Randy Sandke, Phil Bodner, and others. . . . ¶ July 28: Dave Frishberg, Frank Wess, Joe Temperley, Milt Hinton, Butch Miles, Spanky Davis, Mr. Hyman, and Derek Smith. . . . ¶ July 29: Flip Phillips, Carol Woods, Roy Gerson, Mr. Hinton, Joe Wilder, and others. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Evenings at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the Baltimore Orioles, July 28-29 at 7:30 and July 30 at 1.

Mets—Vs. the Los Angeles Dodgers, July 20-21 at 7:40 and July 22 at 1:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the San Diego Padres, July 24 at 7:40, July 25 at 7:10, and July 26 at 1:40.
(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000; and the Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays, except Mondays and Thursdays, at 1:05. . . . At Atlantic City Race Course: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:25. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Mondays through Saturdays at 8 and Tuesdays at 1; Sundays at 6:15. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Big Fish—For six days this summer (July 20-25), it's open season in Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Fisherpeople under the age of fifteen may gather at the north bank of the lake, from 11 to 4, and cast for carp, sunfish, catfish, and bass. Prizes for the biggest catches will be awarded at the rustic shelter on Aug. 1 at 11 A.M. To register, call 1-718 287-3400.

Powwow—A festival of American Indian singing, dancing, and food, sponsored by the Thunderbird American Indian Dancers and the people at the Queens County Farm Museum. (73-50 Little Neck Parkway, Floral Park, Queens. July 25, from 2 to 5 and from 7 to 10, and July 26, from 1 to 4. For directions and more information, call 1-718 347-3276.)

Walks, July 26—At noon: A food-oriented stroll through the different neighborhoods of the Lower East Side. Snack foods include bialys, dim sum, and cannoli. Sponsored by Big Onion Walking Tours. For reservations, call 439-1090. . . . ¶ At 1: A look at sites on the Upper West Side where gangsters lived and died. Sponsored by the Museum of the City of New York. For reservations, call 534-1672, ext. 206.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 14.

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Monster in a Box" (directed by Nick Broomfield), with Spalding Gray.
Theatre 2: "Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).
Theatre 3: (Separate admissions) "Hear My Song" (†); and "Antonia and Jane" (Beeban Kidron), with Imelda Staunton and Saskia Reeves.
Theatre 4: "Zentropa" (Lars Von Trier, in English and German), with Jean-Marc Barr, Barbara Sukowa, and Eddie Constantine.
Theatre 5: "Night on Earth" (†).
Theatre 6: "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French), with Dominique Pinon and Marie-Laure Dougnac.

LITTLE THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
(Separate admissions) "Cousin Bobby" (†); "Brazil" (1985, Terry Gilliam), with Jonathan Pryce, Kim Greist, Robert De Niro, Katherine Helmond, Michael Palin, Ian Holm, Ian Richardson, and Kathryn Pogson; and "The Night of the Hunter" (1955, Charles Laughton), with Robert Mitchum, Shelley Winters, and Lillian Gish.

NEWMAN THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
July 20: Theatre closed.
July 21-23: "Cronaca Familiare" (1962, Valerio Zurlini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni; and "Ragazzi Fuori" (1989, Marco Risi; in Italian).
July 24: "Intervista" (1987, Federico Fellini; in Italian) and "Mignon é Partita" (1987, Francesca Archibugi; in Italian).
July 25-26: "La Strada" (†); and "Mignon é Partita."
July 27: Theatre closed.
From July 28: "I Basilischi" (1963, Lina Wertmüller; in Italian) and "La Carne" (1991, Marco Ferreri; in Italian).

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 2: "Universal Soldier" (†).
Theatre 3: "Unlawful Entry" (†).

LOEWS VILLAGE THEATRE VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Patriot Games" (†).
Theatre 2: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 3: Through July 23: "Batman Returns" (†). From July 24: "Mom and Dad Save the World" (Greg Beeman), with Teri Garr, Jeffrey Jones, and Jon Lovitz.
Theatre 4: "The Best Intentions" (†).
Theatre 5: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 6: "A League of Their Own" (†).
Theatre 7: "A League of Their Own" (†).

VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Sister Act" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Adjuster" (Atom Egoyan).
Theatre 3: "Daughters of the Dust" (1991, Julie Dash).
Theatre 4: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman.
Theatre 5: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid."
Theatre 6: "A Stranger Among Us" (†).
Theatre 7: Through July 23: (Matinées only) "Pinocchio" (†); and (evenings only) "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish), with Victoria Abril, Jorge Sanz, and Maribel Verdu. From July 24: "Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Stacey Dash, Joe Santos, John Diehl, and Harry J. Lennix.

LOEWS 19TH STREET EAST 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Universal Soldier" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 3: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 4: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 5: "Universal Soldier" (†).
Theatre 6: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi).

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Playboys" (†).

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"A League of Their Own" (†).

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman.
Theatre 2: "Boomerang" (†).

Peggy Cummins and John Dall in "Gun Crazy"

Theatre 3: "A Stranger Among Us" (†).
Theatre 4: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid."

LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 2: "Universal Soldier" (†).
Theatre 3: Through July 23: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi). From July 24: "Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Stacey Dash, Joe Santos, John Diehl, and Harry J. Lennix.

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Casablanca" (1942, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Claude Rains, Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, and Peter Lorre.

SUTTON 1 AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman.
Theatre 2:"Honey, I Blew Up the Kid."

CROWN GOTHAM, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Unlawful Entry" (†).

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese).

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 23: "Boomerang" (†). From July 24: "Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Stacey Dash, Joe Santos, John Diehl, and Harry J. Lennix.

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Housesitter" (†).
Theatre 2: "Prelude to a Kiss" (†).

CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "A Stranger Among Us" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sister Act" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Playboys" (†).

ART EAST CINEMA, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
"Toto le Heros" (Jaco Van Dormael; in French), with Michel Bouquet.

FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 2: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci.
Theatre 3: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 4: "Far and Away" (Ron Howard), with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.
Theatre 5: (Matinées only) "Pinocchio" (†); and (evenings only) "The Waterdance" (Neal Jimenez and Michael Steinberg), with Eric Stoltz, Wesley Snipes, William Forsythe, Helen Hunt, and Elizabeth Peña.
Theatre 6: "Basic Instinct" (Paul Verhoeven), with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone.

GEMINI 1 AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 2: "Universal Soldier" (†).

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Best Intentions" (†).

LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through July 23: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi). From July 24: "Mom and Dad Save the World" (Greg Beeman), with Teri Garr, Jeffrey Jones, and Jon Lovitz.
Theatre 2: "Patriot Games" (†).

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).

LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"A League of Their Own" (†).

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Patriot Games" (†).

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Housesitter" (†).
Theatre 2: "Unlawful Entry" (†).

LOEWS ORPHEUM VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Sister Act" (†).
Theatre 2: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 3: "Universal Soldier" (†).
Theatre 4: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 5: Through July 23: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi). From July 24: "Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Stacey Dash, Joe Santos, John Diehl, and Harry J. Lennix.
Theatre 6: "Prelude to a Kiss" (†).
Theatre 7: Through July 23: "Boomerang" (†). From July 24: "Mom and Dad Save the World" (Greg Beeman), with Teri Garr, Jeffrey Jones, and Jon Lovitz.

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "A Stranger Among Us" (†).
Theatre 2: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Echoes from a Somber Empire" (1990, directed by Werner Herzog; in French and English), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "One False Move" (†).

WAVERLY 1 AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Prelude to a Kiss" (†).
Theatre 2: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi).

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boomerang" (†).

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Wisecracks" (†).
Theatre 2: "For Sasha" (Alexandre Arcady, in French), with Sophie Marceau and Richard Berry.
Theatre 3: "Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).
Theatre 4: Through July 23: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese). From July 24: "Afraid of the Dark" (Mark Peploe), with Fanny Ardant, James Fox, and Ben Keyworth.

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sister Act" (†).
Theatre 3: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 4: "Unlawful Entry" (†).

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Theatre 5: "A League of Their Own" (†).
Theatre 6: "Prelude to a Kiss" (†).
Theatre 7: "A Stranger Among Us" (†).
Theatre 8: Through July 23: "Unlawful Entry" (†). From July 24: "Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Stacey Dash, Joe Santos, John Diehl, and Harry J. Lennix.
Theatre 9: "A League of Their Own" (†).

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Patriot Games" (†).
Theatre 2: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman.
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Pinocchio" (†); and (evenings only) "Housesitter" (†).

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"A Stranger Among Us" (†).

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).
Theatre 2: "The Playboys" (†).
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Pinocchio" (†); and (evenings only) "Housesitter" (†).
Theatre 4: "Patriot Games" (†).
Theatre 5: "Wisecracks" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Player" (†).

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"A League of Their Own" (†).

LOEWS FESTIVAL, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Basic Instinct" (Paul Verhoeven), with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone.

57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
Through July 23: "Zentropa" (Lars Von Trier, in English and German), with Jean-Marc Barr, Barbara Sukowa, and Eddie Constantine.
From July 24: "Afraid of the Dark" (Mark Peploe), with Fanny Ardant, James Fox, and Ben Keyworth.

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Prelude to a Kiss" (†).
Theatre 2: "Night on Earth" (†).

LOEWS FINE ARTS, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Howards End" (†).

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
(Separate admissions) "Hear My Song" (†); and "Antonia and Jane" (Beeban Kidron), with Imelda Staunton and Saskia Reeves.

LOEWS COLUMBUS CIRCLE, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"A Stranger Among Us" (†).

62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"A League of Their Own" (†).

LINCOLN PLAZA 1, 2, AND 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "A Tale of Springtime" (Eric Rohmer, in French).
Theatre 2: "The Hairdresser's Husband" (Patrice Leconte, in French), with Jean Rochefort and Anna Galiena.
Theatre 3: "The Player" (†).

REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Unlawful Entry" (†).

LOEWS 84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through July 23: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi). From July 24: "Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Stacey Dash, Joe Santos, John Diehl, and Harry J. Lennix.
Theatre 2: "Patriot Games" (†).
Theatre 3: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 4: "Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman.
Theatre 5: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 6: "Universal Soldier" (†).

METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 2: "Housesitter" (†).

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Pinocchio" (†); and (evenings only) "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sister Act" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Basic Instinct" (directed by Paul Verhoeven), with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone.
Theatre 2: "Universal Soldier" (†).
Theatre 3: "Man Trouble" (Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson and Ellen Barkin.
Theatre 4: "Batman Returns" (†).
Theatre 5: Through July 23: "Universal Soldier" (†). From July 24: "Mom and Dad Save the World" (Greg Beeman), with Teri Garr, Jeffrey Jones, and Jon Lovitz.
Theatre 6: "Universal Soldier" (†).
Theatre 7: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).

EMBASSY 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Honey, I Blew Up the Kid" (Randal Kleiser), with Rick Moranis and Marcia Strassman.

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boomerang" (†).
Theatre 3: "Sister Act" (†).

LOEWS ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through July 23: "Cool World" (Ralph Bakshi).
From July 24: "Mo' Money" (Peter Macdonald), with Damon Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Stacey Dash, Joe Santos, John Diehl, and Harry J. Lennix.

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Unlawful Entry" (†).
Theatre 2: "Unlawful Entry" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

LE CINEMATOGRAPHE, 15 Vandam St. (675-4680)
Through July 23: "Blast of Silence" (1961, directed by Allen Baron), with Baron, Molly McCarthy, and Larry Tucker.
July 24: "Detour" (1945, Edgar G. Ulmer), with Ann Savage and Tom Neal; and "Stranger on the 3rd Floor" (1940, Boris Ingster), with Peter Lorre.
July 25: "The Prowler" (1951, Joseph Losey), with Van Heflin and Evelyn Keyes; and "Brute Force" (1947, Jules Dassin), with Burt Lancaster and Hume Cronyn.
July 26: "Amazing Mr. X" (1948, Bernard Vorhaus), with Turhan Bey and Lynn Bari; and "The Leopard Man" (1943, Jacques Tourneur), with Dennis O'Keefe.
July 27: "Betrayed" (1944, William Castle), with Kim Hunter, Dean Jagger, and Robert Mitchum; and "The Seventh Victim" (1943, Mark Robson), with Kim Hunter, Tom Conway, and Jean Brooks.
July 28: "The Reckless Moment" (1949, Max Ophuls), with James Mason and Joan Bennett; and "Act of Violence" (1948, Fred Zinnemann), with Van Heflin, Robert Ryan, and Janet Leigh.
July 29: "The Lineup" (1958, Don Siegel), with Eli Wallach and Richard Jaeckel; and "Murder by Contract" (1958, Irving Lerner), with Vince Edwards.

8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through July 21: "The Wild Bunch" (1969, Sam Peckinpah), with William Holden, Ernest Borgnine, and Robert Ryan; and "McCabe & Mrs. Miller" (1971, Robert Altman), with Warren Beatty and Julie Christie.
July 22-25: "The World's Best Commercials: Cannes 1991."
July 26-28: "Paris Is Burning" (1991, Jennie Livingston), a documentary; and "The Boys in the Band" (†).
From July 29: "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" (1962, Robert Aldrich), with Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, and Victor Buono; and "Let Him Have It" (1991, Peter Medak), with Tom Courtenay, Eileen Atkins, Clare Holman, Chris Eccleston, and Paul Reynolds.

FILM FORUM 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
July 20: "Sudden Fear" (1952, David Miller), with Joan Crawford, Jack Palance, and Gloria Grahame; and "Sorry, Wrong Number" (1948, Anatole Litvak), with Barbara Stanwyck and Burt Lancaster.
July 21-22: "The Set-Up" (1949, Robert Wise), with Robert Ryan and Audrey Totter; and "The Enforcer" (1950, Bretaigne Windust), with Humphrey Bogart.
July 23: "Pitfall" (1948, André de Toth), with Lizabeth Scott, Dick Powell, Jane Wyatt, and Raymond Burr; and "Fallen Angel" (†).
July 24-26: "Gun Crazy" (†); and "The Big Combo" (1955, Joseph H. Lewis), with Cornel Wilde, Jean Wallace, Richard Conte, and Brian Donlevy.
July 27-28: "Somewhere in the Night" (1946, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with John Hodiak, Nancy Guild, Lloyd Nolan, and Richard Conte; and "I Wake Up Screaming" (1942, H. Bruce Humberstone), with Bette Grable, Victor Mature, Carole Landis, and Laird Cregar.
From July 29: "Born to Kill" (1947, Robert Wise), with Claire Trevor, Walter Slezak, Lawrence Tierney, and Audrey Long; and "The Devil Thumbs a Ride" (1947, Felix Feist), with Tierney.

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
July 20: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada; and "Muriel" (1963, Resnais; in French), with Delphine Seyrig.
July 21: "Ministry of Fear" (1944, Fritz Lang), with Ray Milland, Marjorie Reynolds, and Dan Duryea; and "The Fallen Idol" (1948, Carol Reed), with Bobby Henrey, Ralph Richardson, and Michèle Morgan.
July 22: "Sudden Fear" (1952, David Miller), with Joan Crawford, Jack Palance, and Gloria Grahame; and "Harriet Craig" (1950, Vincent Sherman), with Crawford and Wendell Corey.
July 23: "To Catch a Thief" (1955, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, Jessie Royce Landis, Charles Vanel, and Brigitte Auber; and "Wait Until Dark" (1967, Terence Young), with Audrey Hepburn, Alan Arkin, and Richard Crenna.
July 24-25: "Notorious" (see page 16); and "Spellbound" (1945, Alfred Hitchcock), with Ingrid Bergman, Gregory Peck, Michael Chekhov, John Emery, and Leo G. Carroll.
July 26: "Citizen Kane" (1941, Orson Welles), with Welles, Joseph Cotten, Dorothy Comingore, Agnes Moorehead, and Everett Sloane; and "The Magnificent Ambersons" (1942, Welles), with Dolores Costello, Cotten, Tim Holt, and Moorehead.
July 27: "Bob le Flambeur" (1955, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French), with Isabelle Corey and Roger Duchesne; and "My Life to Live" (1962, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Anna Karina.
July 28: "Goldfinger" (1964, Guy Hamilton), with Sean Connery, Gert Frobe, Honor Blackman, and Shirley Eaton; and "From Russia with Love" (1964, Terence Young), with Connery, Robert Shaw, Lotte Lenya, Pedro Armendariz, and Daniele Bianchi.
July 29: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (1975, Milos Forman), with Jack Nicholson, Louise Fletcher, and Will Sampson; and "Taking Off" (1971, Milos Forman), with Lynn Carlin and Buck Henry.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—July 20 at noon: "Z" (1969, directed by Costa-Gavras; in French), with Yves Montand, Irene Papas, and Jean-Louis Trintignant. . . . ¶ July 20 at 2:30 and July 23 at 3: "Manhattan" (1979, Woody Allen), with Allen. . . . ¶ July 20 at 6 and July 21 at noon: "An Unfinished Piece for Player Piano" (1977, Nikita Mikhalkov; in Russian). . . . ¶ July 21 at 3 and July 23 at 6: "Sound and Fury" (1987, Jean-Claude Brisseau; in French), with Bruno Cremer. . . . ¶ July 21 at 6 and July 25 at noon: "Beauty and the Beast" (1946, Jean Cocteau; in French), with Jean Marais, Josette Day, Marcel André, and Michel Auclair. . . . ¶ July 23 at noon and July 24 at 3: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada. . . . ¶ July 24 at noon and July 26 at 2:30: "Black Girl" (1969, Ousmane Sembène; in French); and "The Children's Hour" (1969, Arturo Ripstein; a Mexican film). . . . ¶ July 24 at 6 and July 25 at 2:30: "Dossier 51" (1978, Michel Deville; in English and French). . . . ¶ July 25 at 5 and July 27 at 3: "Extérieur Nuit" (1980, Jacques Brel; in French), with Christine Boisson. . . . ¶ July 26 at noon and July 27 at 6: "Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach" (1967, Jean-Marie Straub; in German), with Gustav Leonhardt and Christiane Lang. . . . ¶ July 26 at 5 and July 28 at noon: "The Three Crowns of the Sailor" (1983, Raoul Ruiz; in French). . . . ¶ July 27 at noon and July 28 at 6: "A Man and a Woman" (1966, Claude Lelouch; in French), with Anouk Aimée, Jean-Louis Trintignant, and Pierre Barouh. . . . ¶ July 28 at 3: "When Father Was Away on Business" (1985, Emir Kusturica; in Serbo-Croatian).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—July 20 at 2: "Kukurantumi" (1983, King Ampaw). . . . ¶ July 20 at 4: "Boseman and Lena" (1972, Ross Devenish). . . . ¶ July 20 at 6, July 21 at 2, and July 22 at 6:15: "Voyage en Douce" (1979, Michel Deville; in French), with Dominique Sanda and Geraldine Chaplin. . . . ¶ July 20 at 8:15, July 21 at 4:15, and July 22 at 8:30: "Going Places" (1974, Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Miou-Miou, and Patrick Dewaere. . . . ¶ July 21 at 6:30, July 22 at 2, and July 23 at 6:15: "Brothers" (1991, Bakhtiyar Khudoynazarov). . . . ¶ July 21 at 8:45, July 22 at 4:15, and July 23 at 8:30: "Walkabout" (1971, Nicolas Roeg). . . . ¶ July 23 at 2, July 24 at 6:15, and July 25 at 2: "A Hungarian Fairy Tale" (†). . . . ¶ July 23 at 4:15, July 24 at 8:15, and July 25 at 4:10: "The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey" (1988, Vincent Ward). . . . ¶ July 24 at 2, July 25 at 6:15, and July 26 at

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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

6:15: "Vagabond" (†).... ¶ July 24 at 4 and July 25-26 at 8:15: "Every Other Weekend" (1991, Nicole Garcia).... ¶ July 26 at 2, July 27 at 6:30, and July 28 at 2: "The Beekeeper" (1986, Theo Angelopoulos).... ¶ July 26 at 4:15, July 27 at 8:45, and July 28 at 4:15: "The Seventh Seal" (1956, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow, Gunnar Björnstrand, Bibi Andersson, and Nils Poppe.... ¶ July 27 at 2, July 28 at 6:15, and July 29 at 2: "Pierrot le Fou" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo and Anna Karina.... ¶ July 27 at 4:15, July 28 at 8:25, and July 29 at 4:15: "Weekend" (†).... ¶ July 29 at 6:15: "Ariel" (Aki Kaurismäki; in Finnish).... ¶ July 29 at 7:45: "Bye Bye Brazil" (1980, Carlos Diegues; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese), with Bette Faria and Jose Wilker.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077) "American Impressionist: A Robert Altman Retrospective." July 25 at 2: "Apollo With a Gun" (1959), an episode of "Sugarfoot"; and "Cat and Mouse" (1962), an episode of "Combat."... ¶ July 25 at 4:30: "M*A*S*H" (†).... ¶ July 26 at 2: "Brewster McCloud" (1971), with Bud Cort, Sally Kellerman, and Shelley Duvall.... ¶ July 26 at 4: "That Cold Day in the Park" (1969), with Sandy Dennis and Michael Burns.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—July 24 at 3 and 7: "Being There" (1979, Hal Ashby), with Peter Sellers, Shirley MacLaine, Melvyn Douglas, and Jack Warden.... ¶ July 25 at 3 and 7: "Lost Horizon" (1937, Frank Capra), with Ronald Colman, Margo, Sam Jaffe, and Edward Everett Horton.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—July 22 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Pauline at the Beach" (1982, Eric Rohmer; in French).... ¶ July 29 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Voyage en Douce" (1979, Michel Deville; in French), with Dominique Sanda and Geraldine Chaplin.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdan Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—July 22 at 8: "The Merry Widow" (1925, Erich von Stroheim; silent), with Mae Murray and John Gilbert.... ¶ July 29 at 8: "Kid Boots" (1926, Frank Tuttle; silent), with Eddie Cantor and Clara Bow. (Organ accompaniment written and played by Lee Erwin.)

Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—July 23 at 6:30: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (1990, Peter Greenaway), with Michael Gambon, Helen Mirren, Alan Howard, and Richard Bohringer.... ¶ July 23 at 9: "Caravaggio" (1986, Derek Jarman), with Nigel Terry.... ¶ July 24 at 5:30 and 8:45: "The Shop on Main Street" (†).... ¶ July 24 at 7:45: "The Boxer and Death" (1962, Peter Solan; in Czech).... ¶ July 25 at 5 and 9: "Andrei Roublev" (1969, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian).... ¶ July 26 at 5: "Fanny and Alexander" (1983, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish).

(Clockwise, from top left) Billy Bob Thornton, Michael Beach, Cynda Williams, and Bill Paxton in "One False Move"

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—July 23 at 6: "Native Son" (1951, Pierre Chenal), with Richard Wright and Jean Wallace.... ¶ July 23 at 7:45: "Lost Boundaries" (1949, Alfred Werker), with Beatrice Pearson and Mel Ferrer.... ¶ July 23 at 9:30: "An Affair of the Skin" (1963, Ben Maddow), with Viveca Lindfors, Kevin McCarthy, Lee Grant, Diana Sands, and Herbert Berghof.... ¶ July 24 at 6: "Tarzan the Fearless" (1933, Robert F. Hill), with Buster Crabbe.... ¶ July 24 at 7:30: "Tarzan's Revenge" (1938, D. Ross Lederman), with Glenn Morris.... ¶ July 24 at 9: "Tarzan and the Green Goddess" (1938, Edward Kull), with Herman Brix.... ¶ July 25 at 1, 5, and 9: "Persona" (1967, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann.... ¶ July 25 at 2:30, 6:30, and 10:30: "The Diary of a Country Priest" (1950, Robert Bresson; in French), with Claude Laydu and Nicole Maurey.... ¶ July 26 at 1, 4:30, and 8: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada.... ¶ July 26 at 2:45, 6:15, and 9:45: "Last Year at Marienbad" (1961, Alain Resnais; in French), with Delphine Seyrig, Giorgio Albertazzi, and Sacha Pitoëff.

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—"Jim Henson's World of Television." "Jim Henson's Mother Goose Stories: Little Bo Peep" (1990), "The Tale of the Bunny Picnic" (1986), and "Tales from Muppetland: The Frog Prince" (1971). Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 1.... ¶ "The Jim Henson Hour: Dog City" (1989) and "The Storyteller: The Soldier and Death" (1989). Showings Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Batman Returns—Tim Burton's sequel to his phenomenally successful 1989 "Batman" doesn't try to top the first picture, either with splashier special effects or with loftier pretensions to significance; nor does it simply go through the motions, repeating the surefire stuff with a self-satisfied air of professionalism. It's a blend of playful novelty and reassuring familiarity—a difficult mixture to get right. This time, the hero (again Michael Keaton) does battle with a greedy businessman named Max Shreck (Christopher Walken) and the roly-poly arch-criminal known as the Penguin (Danny DeVito). And whenever Batman ventures out on one of his nocturnal crime-fighting missions, he runs into a mysterious woman who dresses like a cat and carries a whip. The hilariously twisted relationship between the hero and the Catwoman (Michelle Pfeiffer) plays like an apache dance in animal costumes, and it's the glory of the movie. The cat clothes seem to release something strange and wild in Pfeiffer: her performance is ferociously sexy and uninhibitedly, over-the-top funny. As in the first movie, Burton gives the material a luxurious masked-ball quality and a sly contemporary wit without violating the myth's low, cheesy comic-book origins. He's an artist who's comfortable with both the higher aspirations and the lower instincts of his nature as an entertainer: he and Batman are an ideal match. Screenplay by Daniel Waters; cinematography by Stefan Czapsky; score by Danny Elfman; production design by Bo Welch.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/29/92.) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Loews Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Best Intentions—Directed by Bille August, in Swedish. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews Village Theatre VII, and Beekman.)

Boomerang—Set in a world where entire upscale companies are run by African-Americans, this Eddie Murphy vehicle tries hard to be positive. It's a pity that the movie isn't any good. Murphy is a Manhattan marketing hot shot and ladies' man who ends up working under the woman of his dreams (Robin Givens) when their cosmetics firms merge. She treats him as cavalierly as he treated the previous women in his life; the script hands out one earnest lesson after another, so that he can learn what it feels like to be used. Givens knows how to employ her flashing eyes and chiselled, haughty features for comic effect, but she doesn't get a single clever line. As the gal who strives to save the hero, Halle Berry is so much more accessible than Givens, while being equally pretty, that dramatically there's no contest. Murphy has a couple of peppy scenes with David Alan Grier and Martin Lawrence, who play his best buddies, but a lot of the time he acts unconvincingly modest. The screenplay (by Barry W. Blaustein and David Sheffield), with its constant references to Murphy's sexual magnetism, does all the bragging for him. Padded with manic interludes involving Eartha Kitt, Geoffrey Holder, and Grace Jones; directed by Reginald Hudlin.—M.S. (7/13/92) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Loews Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

The Boys in the Band (1970)—A gathering of homosexuals at a birthday party; it's like the gathering of bitchy ladies in "The Women," but with a forties-movie bomber-crew cast: a Catholic, a Jew, a Negro, a hustler, one who is butch, and one who is nellie, and so on. They crack jokes while their hearts are breaking. The message appears to be that the spirit of M-G-M in the forties still lives in the hearts and jokes of homosexuals. William Friedkin directed Mart Crowley's adaptation of his own play; Crowley preserves the text as if the quips were ageless. With Leonard Frey, Cliff Gorman, and Laurence Luckinbill.—P.K. (8th St. Playhouse; July 26-28.)

Cousin Bobby—Jonathan Demme's film about his cousin Robert Castle, an Episcopal pastor who works in Harlem, has a loose, friendly home-movie quality that's weird but appealing. Bobby is a chunky, balding, sixtyish priest who leads his poor parishioners on protest marches, delivers fiery speeches on the evils of racism, and generally stirs things up on behalf of the disadvantaged, the neglected, and the oppressed. Demme's offhand approach draws us into an unusual kind of intimacy with Bobby and the ravaged urban world he lives in. The movie is a brilliantly original portrait of a complex personality: it does justice to both the continuities and the discontinuities of its subject's life story. Demme, who is onscreen a fair amount, acts as a genial, low-pressure host; his manner is an invitation to the audience to join in the family feeling that's growing between him and his cousin. The film ends up being a lovely, amiably persuasive demonstration of the personal sources of political conviction.—T.R. (6/1/92) (Little Theatre.)

Fallen Angel (1945)—There was a brief period when Otto Preminger made well-paced, engaging melodramas, and this is one of them; it isn't in the class of his "Laura," but it's tolerable, in a tawdry sort of way. Dana Andrews arrives in a small California town with a dollar to his name, gets an itch for a money-loving waitress (Linda Darnell, so it's easy to sympathize with him), and marries the local rich girl (Alice Faye) to get the dough to win the waitress. But his sordid plan misfires: the waitress is murdered, and he becomes the prime suspect. Dana Andrews is saturnine and convincing, and although Alice Faye isn't altogether comfortable playing Brahms on a church organ and poring over Proust, the good cast includes Charles Bickford, Bruce Cabot, Jimmy Conlin, John Carradine, Anne Revere, and Percy Kilbride. Harry Kleiner adapted Marty Holland's novel.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; July 23.)

Gun Crazy (1949)—Peggy Cummins and John Dall in a tawdry version of the Bonnie-and-

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Clyde story. Cummins is a really mean broad, whose partner is her desperately eager victim. In its B-picture way, it has a fascinating crumminess. With Morris Carnovsky, Berry Kroeger, Annabel Shaw, and Don Beddoe. Directed by Joseph H. Lewis, from a screenplay based on MacKinlay Kantor's *SatEvePost* story, and credited to Kantor and Millard Kaufman. Dalton Trumbo, who was blacklisted at the time, later revealed that he wrote the script and persuaded Kaufman to let his name be used.— P.K. (Film Forum 2; July 24-26.)

HEAR MY SONG—In this small-scale comedy, Peter Chelsom, a first-time director, takes a whimsical conceit and sells it so hard that it loses most of its fragile charm. Micky O'Neill (played by Adrian Dunbar, who co-wrote the screenplay with Chelsom) manages a Liverpool music hall that caters to the local Irish community; the movie is about his attempt to find a legendary Irish tenor named Josef Locke, who hasn't been heard from in thirty years. Micky goes to Ireland to persuade Locke to return to England for a concert; on the home soil, the hero finds himself in a realm of ancient eccentricity and unearthly light, and the movie finds itself in Bill Forsyth territory. Chelsom tries, too strenuously, to evoke the enchanted comic tone of "Local Hero," and Dunbar seems to punctuate every gag with a roguish smile. The relentless quirkiness is annoying, but the story is, on its own terms, well constructed, and the filmmakers take their fey, sentimental humor right to the limit: you can't say that they don't have the courage of their elfinness. And when Ned Beatty, who plays Locke, is on the screen the picture is nearly as transporting as it's intended to be. His performance is large-spirited comic acting: a pure specimen of Celtic soulfulness, the magical substance that everyone else in the movie has been trying to produce synthetically. Also with Shirley Anne Field.—T.R. (3/9/92) (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema 3.)

HOUSESITTER—A smug, lame comedy, directed by Frank Oz from a script by Mark Stein (and a story by Stein and the producer, Brian Grazer). Goldie Hawn plays a free spirit named Gwen, who takes charge of a floundering Boston architect named Newton Davis (Steve Martin). Gwen is an accomplished liar, and Hawn spins her biggest whoppers with sweeping confidence. Hawn keeps the audience on Gwen's side even when she commandeers a dream house that Newton intended for his childhood sweetheart, Becky (Dana Delany), and poses as Newton's wife. Gwen has genuine screwball potential—too bad it goes totally unrealized. She falls hard for Newton's idyllic home town, Dobbs Mill, in all its Colonial glory. This movie isn't anarchically egalitarian, like the great screwball comedies; it's upwardly mobile. Martin hasn't lost his timing or slapstick grace, but his inspiration is at low ebb. Peter MacNicol fashions his own pocket of furtive craziness, and Christopher Durang contributes a bright, subversive cameo. But the rest of the film is reflexively conventional. It's no more than a little white lie—very little and very white.—M.S. (6/29/92) (Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas. Evenings only.)

HOWARDS END—James Ivory's movie version of the 1910 E. M. Forster novel is a handsome and intelligent piece of work: a faithful, well-paced, and carefully crafted dramatization of a very good story. The heroine, Margaret Schlegel (Emma Thompson), is a thirtyish Englishwoman of German ancestry who lives with her sister and her brother in a London town house. The plot brings the cultured and rather high-minded Schlegels in contact with a very different sort of family, the Wilcoxes, who appear to represent English values at their most infuriatingly solid and complacent. The emotional core of the movie is the brief, unlikely friendship that develops between Margaret and conservative Ruth Wilcox (Vanessa Redgrave), a woman who inhabits a narrow world so profoundly, and with such enormous feeling, that she transforms it. Redgrave is at her most radiant in this role. And Thompson, whose character is meant to be seen as the heir to Mrs. Wilcox's thoroughly English kind of spirituality, comes through with a thrilling, original performance; she carries the movie. These luminous performances go a long way toward putting Forster's ambitious ideas across on the screen. (Anthony

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IN BRIEF–*Cont'd*

Hopkins, as the no-nonsense businessman Henry Wilcox, is awfully good, too.) The story holds us for the full two hours and twenty minutes that the movie takes to tell it; Ivory and his screenwriter, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, have done a skillful and sensitive job of adaptation. All that's missing, really, is the elusive quality that makes Forster such a brave, moving writer: his constant striving to see beyond the story, to see through it, to transcend it.—T.R. (5/4/92) (Loews Fine Arts.)

A Hungarian Fairy Tale (1987)—A beautiful woman and a dashing man meet at a performance of "The Magic Flute," conceive a child, and never see each other again. Years later, when the young mother is killed by a falling brick, their son sets out to find his father, not knowing that the information on his birth certificate is just a bureaucratic fiction—he's looking for someone whose name and address are purely fanciful, plucked out of thin air by his mother and a helpful official. For the rest of the film, this solemn-faced boy (Dávid Vermes) wanders through an ambigious landscape: a Hungary in which the real and the fantastic seem to have coupled and given birth to something unaccountable. The director, Gyula Gazdag, makes this no-man's-land both lovely and grotesque. And the film, exquisitely shot (in black-and-white) by Elemér Ragályi, is an original, fully realized vision, lucid and ironic. Frame by frame, it looks like a classic, and it comes together satisfyingly when you think about it afterward. Yet it's puzzlingly tedious. The movie is hushed and elegant and wholly self-contained, an extraordinary object inside a bell jar. This fable about freedom of the imagination seems, finally, to be constrained by its own artistry. Also with Frantisek Husák, Mária Varga, and Eszter Csákányi. In Hungarian.—T.R. (Walter Reade Theatre; July 23-25.)

A League of Their Own—Penny Marshall's fictional account of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League has no mind of its own. Marshall directed it with both eyes on the audience. She and the screenwriting team of Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel slap together a bare-bones narrative (about the league's 1943 début season) and dress it up with set-piece gags and sentimental ploys. All they want is for people to come out saying that they laughed and they cried. The lead characters are Dottie Hinson (Geena Davis) and her kid sister, Kit Keller (Lori Petty), who catch and pitch, respectively, for the Rockford Peaches and act out their sibling tensions on the baseball diamond and in the locker room. Tom Hanks mugs ingratiatingly as Jimmy Dugan, the Rockford coach and an alcoholic former slugger, and Madonna sashays through the supporting role of All the Way Mae, a ballplayer who tests the league's deportment code. This movie aims for the tear ducts and the funny bone as ruthlessly as the summer's big action-fantasy hits go after the viscera. It unfolds in field-of-dreams land—complete with cornstalks.—M.S. (7/13/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Bay Cinema, Loews Tower East, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Lethal Weapon 3—When that manic L.A.P.D. detective Martin Riggs (Mel Gibson) visits the home of rough-and-ready I.A.D. cop Lorna Cole (Rene Russo), he notices that her personal computer contains Three Stooges software. Moe, Larry, and Curly, who showed up in a film clip in "LW2," have become the guiding spirits of the series. The director, Richard Donner, and the screenwriters, Jeffrey Boam and Robert Mark Kamen, are too proud of their hit formula. They keep restating it: Cole describes the career of Riggs and his staid partner, Roger Murtaugh (Danny Glover), as a combination of "*The Police Gazette* and *Mad* magazine." Topically enough, the villain is a sadistic, corrupt ex-cop (played by Stuart Wilson). But all Donner and company deliver is their usual quasi-comic "chaos and mayhem." Joe Pesci surfaces again as Valley-speaking fixer Leo Getz, presumably to prove that the more stooges the merrier. But the central gag goes unstated. Riggs and Murtaugh are supposed to be effective. The "Lethal Weapon" movies put Keystone Kops on the Thin Blue Line and ask us to cheer them toward victory.—M.S. (Loews 19th Street East 6, 59th Street East Cinema, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Olympia. Evenings only.)

M*A*S*H (1970)—Robert Altman's marvellously unstable comedy—a tough, funny, and sophisticated burlesque of military attitudes that is at the same time a tale of chivalry. It's an episodic film, full of the pleasures of the unexpected, and it keeps you busy listening to some of the best overlapping comic dialogue ever recorded. The title letters stand for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital; the heroes, played by Donald Sutherland and Elliott Gould, are combat surgeons patching up casualties a few miles from the front during the Korean War. They do their surgery in style, with humor; they're hip Galahads, saving lives while ragging the military bureaucracy. They're quick to react to bull—and in startling, unpredictable ways. The movie's chief charm is a free-for-all, throwaway attitude. It combines traditional roustabout comedy with modern attitudes. A surgical hospital where the doctors' hands are lost in chests and guts is certainly an unlikely subject for comedy, but "M*A*S*H" is probably the sanest American movie of its era. With Tom Skerritt, Sally Kellerman, Robert Duvall, René Auberjonois, Jo Ann Pflug, Gary Burghof, Fred Williamson, Roger Bowen, David Arkin, Michael Murphy, John Schuck, Kim Atwood, Bud Cort, Carl Gottlieb, and Corey Fischer. The semi-improvised material takes off from a script by Ring Lardner, Jr., based on the novel by Richard Hooker (a doctor's pseudonym). Cinematography by Harold E. Stine. (The movie provided the basis for the long-running TV series starring Alan Alda.)—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; July 25.)

"Notorious" (playing July 24-25, at Theatre 80 St. Marks) is one of Hitchcock's most seductive high-style thrillers—a taut spy movie that delivers a romantic punch. Hitchcock's hero is an American agent, T.R. Devlin (Cary Grant), who enlists a Nazi's daughter, Alicia Huberman (Ingrid Bergman), for an espionage mission in Rio. Just as Devlin is getting over his initial view of Huberman as a loose woman and a lush, the American spymaster (Louis Calhern) orders her to get close to a suave Nazi named Sebastian (Claude Rains), whom she marries to sustain the scheme. Hitchcock and his screenwriter, Ben Hecht, working in 1944 and 1945 (the film was released in 1946), came up with the topical MacGuffin of uranium ore smuggled in wine bottles. But what makes this Hitchcock movie so enjoyable isn't the nuclear physics in the background but the chemistry between Grant and Bergman, which the filmmaker wisely keeps in the foreground. Unlike Grant's later Hitchcock films, "To Catch a Thief" and "North by Northwest," "Notorious" gives the actor little opportunity for derring-do, athletic tricks, or high jinks. Even the repartee is parcelled out. But the role of Devlin allows him to concentrate his energy. The vehemence that jets through Grant's gleaming, vigilant surface is intensely erotic. Grant seldom seemed as thoroughly American as he does in "Notorious"; he suggests emotional strengths that Devlin can't fully articulate. And Bergman is gloriously European: her manner is both worldly and earthy. She's as all-out as Grant is locked-in, and, for a change, you're convinced that opposites really do attract. In a famous scene, the couple continue to embrace and kiss while Devlin takes the phone call that will lead to their separation. Coitus interruptus has rarely been this blissfully passionate.

Night on Earth—This anthology film, written and directed by Jim Jarmusch ("Stranger Than Paradise"), has a gimmicky premise. Each of its five stories takes place in a different city, and each is about a taxicab ride. All the trips are going on at the same time, but in different time zones, so there's an illusion of temporal progress: the picture begins at sunset in Los Angeles and ends at dawn in Helsinki. (The intervening episodes take place in New York, Paris, and Rome.) It's a feeble but serviceable conceit; if the sketches were funny, we'd barely notice the preciousness of the structure. Unfortunately, the material is very thin, and the movie doesn't vary its style from sketch to sketch: Jarmusch sticks doggedly to his trademark deadpan manner. The comedian Roberto Benigni, playing a motor-mouth cabbie in the Italian episode, briefly enlivens the picture with a riotous erotic monologue. But, for the most part, the movie induces in the viewer an eerie, suspended feeling that mimics the time-stands-still monotony of a long airplane journey. It tries for a chipper, lighthearted tone, but it gives the audience a gruelling flight—a red-eye to nowhere. In English, French, Italian, and Finnish.—T.R. (5/18/92) (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

One False Move—With Bill Paxton, Cynda Williams, Billy Bob Thornton, and Michael Beach; directed by Carl Franklin. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Film Forum.)

Patriot Games—Phillip Noyce's film, adapted from one of Tom Clancy's jillion-selling suspense novels, is a much more effective thriller than it has any right to be. The screenwriters, W. Peter Iliff and Donald Stewart, have eliminated much of the novel's hot air without entirely knocking the wind out of the material; the script tones down Clancy's right-wing ideology and gives the story some straightforward action-movie narrative drive. The plot, which pits Irish terrorists against an Annapolis history professor and sometime C.I.A. analyst named Jack Ryan (Harrison Ford), is ridiculous, boys'-adventure stuff, but the filmmakers almost put it across. Noyce handles the action sequences beautifully: they're lucid and exciting, and their construction has a kind of formal elegance that's oddly satisfying. (He's less successful with the scenes of the Ryan family's domestic bliss, which are meant to establish Jack's credentials as a champion of traditional values.) Ford brings a welcome trace of ambivalence to his character's heroics—a sense that Ryan isn't altogether proud of the lethal efficiency he displays when's he's drawn into combat. Sean Bean, Richard Harris, and (especially) James Fox do nice work in supporting roles. This is an expert, entertaining genre picture. Noyce and his team serve Clancy's crude material well—too well, probably. Also with Anne Archer (who's awful), Thora Birch, James Earl Jones, Samuel L. Jackson, and Patrick Bergin.—T.R. (6/15/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews New York Twin, U. A. East, 23rd St. West Triplex, Worldwide Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Pinocchio (1940)—Disney's best feature cartoon—an elating, sometimes terrifying musical adventure. A good fairy grants woodcarver Geppetto's wish that his puppet Pinocchio were his real son—on condition that the marionette first learn right from wrong. (His nose sprouts like Jack's beanstalk when he tells a lie.) Jiminy Cricket made his infectiously funny début as Pinocchio's conscience. Disney's humane take on Carlo Collodi's imaginative but flinty book is inspiring for children and primally nostalgic for adults. The animation is as fecund and economical as great silent slapstick; the most ingenious bits of business pop like cap pistols. You come out savoring the visual beauty and invention, the narrative zing, and the catchy tunes (by Leigh Harline and Ned Washington), which include "Hi Diddle Dee Dee (An Actor's Life for Me)," "I've Got No Strings," and "When You Wish Upon a Star." Ben Sharpsteen and Hamilton Luske were the supervising directors; seven writers did the adaptation. With the voices of Dickie Jones (Pinocchio), Christian Rub (Geppetto), and Cliff Edwards (Jiminy Cricket).—M.S. (First & 62nd Cinemas, 23rd St. West Tri-

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plex, Worldwide Cinemas, and Olympia. Matinées only. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas; through July 23, matinées only.)

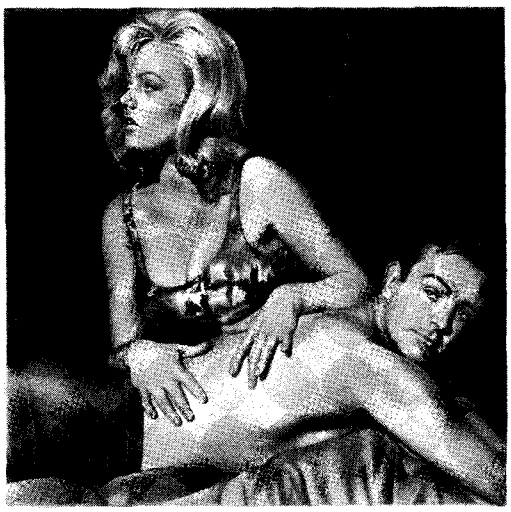
The Playboys—This absorbing, uneven romantic comedy-drama, set in a small Irish town in 1957, takes its name from a travelling troupe. The heroine is an unwed mother named Tara (Robin Wright). She challenges every male authority figure in town and drives all the men wild—especially the violent, alcoholic constable, Sergeant Hegarty (Albert Finney), who seethes when he sees her with her actor lover Tom (Aidan Quinn). The screenwriters, Shane Connaughton (who co-wrote "My Left Foot") and Kerry Crabbe, are full of ideas and observations about orthodox religion, claustrophobic village mores, the craziness of life in a divided country, and the last gasp of strolling players before TV's ascendancy. Wright and Quinn are well matched, and the director, Gillies MacKinnon, and his cinematographer, Jack Conroy, provide images that sparkle with amorous possibilities. But the filmmakers don't funnel their panoply of themes gracefully into Tara's story. Her affair with Tom comes off as a foil to Finney's passionate portrait of stewed wrath and despair. He endows a clenched, masochistic character with such scale and force that he takes over the movie.—M.S. (5/18/92) (Gramercy, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

The Player—The title character of Robert Altman's new movie is a young Hollywood studio executive named Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins), who, for no very good reason, murders an aspiring screenwriter. The picture is a brilliant dark comedy about the death of American filmmaking. It's like a documentary about a mirage: the world it shows us is sunlit and shimmering, and the people have the thin presence of holograms. Altman is doing one of his specialties here—exploring an odd American subculture—and when his idiosyncratic realism is applied to the insular, constantly self-regarding community of Hollywood "players" it has an almost hallucinatory effect. The movie has the exhilarating nonchalance of the director's seventies classics, and its tone is volatile, elusive: with breathtaking assurance, it veers from psychological-thriller suspense to goofball comedy to icy satire. Altman turns the self-reflective world of Hollywood into a fun house in which every grotesque distortion somehow appears to us as a newly discovered, paradoxical truth. Robbins gives a layered, richly suggestive performance—the sort of performance that Altman's style, at its best, produces without obvious effort. At sixty-seven, Altman still seems like the youngest filmmaker in America. Also with Greta Scacchi, Peter Gallagher, Fred Ward, Whoopi Goldberg, Cynthia Stevenson, and Vincent D'Onofrio.—T.R. (4/20/92) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Worldwide Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza.)

Prelude to a Kiss—With Alec Baldwin and Meg Ryan, directed by Norman René. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Coronet, Loews Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

The Shop on Main Street (1965)—An apocalyptic folk tale set in a German-occupied Slovakian village in 1942. A simple, poor carpenter (Josef Kroner) with a nagging wife is appointed by his brother-in-law to be the "Aryan controller" of a button shop run by an aged Jewish woman (Ida Kaminska), and he expects to make his fortune. But the old woman is penniless, has nothing to sell, and is so deaf she doesn't understand that he has come to take over. She assumes he has been sent to be her assistant; he slips into that role, and the two innocents become friends. The story deals with his confusion and spiritual crisis when the Jews are deported. This film has been much honored, though it pulls at the viewer's emotions and its folkishness is laboriously whimsical. Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos, who co-directed, allow us to be too aware of the acting; Kroner's impersonation of a "little man" looks like hard work—in the Paul Muni tradition. Based on a story by Ladislav Grossman. In Czech.—P.K. (Symphony Space; July 24.)

Sister Act—Whoopi Goldberg stars as a Reno lounge singer on the lam from her murderous mobster ex-lover (Harvey Keitel). Disguised as a nun in a San Francisco convent, she manages to bring new music into the choir, fresh street faces into the pews, and a social-activist spirit into the revitalized congregation. The plot and the characters are almost insultingly perfunctory (the pseudonymous Joseph Howard is credited with the script), and when there isn't any rock on the soundtrack the moviemaking is listless. Still, the director, Emile Ardolino, who made "Dirty Dancing," knows how to use sixties hits for an over-all bounce that jumps audiences past dead patches. Goldberg maintains her gruff tone, which helps keep the film from stagnating with sappiness. If Maggie Smith glowers ineffectually as the Mother Superior,



At Theatre 80 St. Marks, Margaret Nolan and Sean Connery in "Goldfinger"

a couple of actresses—Kathy Najimy and Mary Wickes—imbue their nun roles with the euphoria of inspired farceurs. (Najimy defines "overjoyed.") The film isn't a divine comedy, and it's not satisfyingly profane either. But it generates a few laughs. It's got a good beat, and you can dance to it.—M.S. (6/15/92) (Village East Cinemas, Cinema II, Loews Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Olympia, and Embassy.)

La Strada (1954)—The theme of Federico Fellini's spiritual fable is that everyone has a purpose in the universe. It is acted out by three symbolic characters. Giulietta Masina is the waif Geisomina (soul, innocence, spirit, dreams); Anthony Quinn is the strong man Zampanò (brute physical strength, man as animal); Richard Basehart is an artist-fool (mind). Though the background of the film is neorealist poverty, it is transformed by the romanticism of the conception. Giulietta Masina's performance has been compared variously to Chaplin, Harry Langdon, Stan Laurel, Barrault, and Marceau, and the comparisons are just—maybe too just. Basehart's performance as the fool, which is not like the work of other performers, is possibly more exciting. Even if one rejects the concepts of this movie, its mood and the details of scenes stay with one; a year or two later, a gesture or a situation suddenly brings it all back. Winner of at least fifty prizes, including the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. In Italian.—P.K. (Newman Theatre; July 25-26.)

A Stranger Among Us—With Melanie Griffith, directed by Sidney Lumet. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and Loews Columbus Circle.)

Universal Soldier—With Jean-Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren, directed by Roland Emmerich. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Loews Orpheum VII, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterino Center.)

Unlawful Entry—Madeleine Stowe and Kurt Russell play an upwardly mobile L.A. couple; Ray Liotta is the cop who thinks he's a better man for Stowe. For about ten minutes, the movie is an effective exploitation of atavistic male pride, with class warfare mixed in. But it swiftly degenerates into another cat-and-mice thriller—and this time both the cat and, fatally, the audience are much smarter than the mice. The film is short on observation and long on jeopardy. It's what TV executives call "a Jep movie," except that in TV Jep movies the victimized woman gets to avenge herself. Here she needs the protection of her husband. Jonathan Kaplan directed the script by Lewis Colick; Ken Lerner, as Russell's lawyer, and Roger E. Mosley, as Liotta's partner, contribute a smidgen of self-aware humor and realism.—M.S. (7/13/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Crown Gotham, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

Vagabond (1985)—Agnès Varda wrote and directed this scrupulously hardheaded film about an eighteen-year-old girl on the road, a deliberately homeless drifter who lives on handouts, thefts, a little prostitution, and the occasional odd job. At the opening, her frozen body is discovered in a ditch in the countryside near the city of Nîmes. Varda presents the movie as a documentary investigating how this happened; the characters are the sullen, suspicious, vacant-eyed young girl (played immaculately by Sandrine Bonnaire) and the witnesses to her last weeks. The purity and boldness of Varda's approach may call Robert Bresson to mind, and it's perfectly evident why this film won the Golden Lion at the 1985 Venice Film Festival; it's the work of a visual artist. But we see the closed-off girl strictly from the outside, and this factual, objective view isn't enough. Varda's flat-out approach excludes the uses of the imagination—both hers and ours. With Macha Méril. Cinematography by Patrick Blossier. In French.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; July 24-26.)

Weekend (1967)—Only the title of this extraordinary poetic satire is casual and innocent. The writer-director, Jean-Luc Godard, has a gift for making the contemporary satiric and fantastic. He begins with just a slight stylization of civilized living now—the people are more adulterous, more nakedly mercenary, touchier. They have weapons, and use them at the slightest provocation, and it seems perfectly logical that they should get into their cars and bang into one another and start piling up on the roads . The traffic jam is a prelude to highways littered with burning cars and corpses. As long as Godard stays with cars as the symbol of bourgeois materialism, the barbarity of these bourgeois—their greed and the self-love they project onto their possessions—is exact and funny. The picture goes much further—sometimes majestically, sometimes with surreal details that suggest an affinity between Godard and Buñuel, sometimes with methods and ideas that miss, badly. There are extraordinary passages, such as a bourgeois wife's erotic confession and a long virtuoso sequence of tracking shots of cars stalled on the highway, with the motorists pressing down with all their might on their car horns, which sound triumphant, like trumpets in Purcell. Though deeply flawed, this film has more depth than any of Godard's earlier work. It's his vision of Hell, and it ranks with the greatest. As a mystical movie "Weekend" is comparable to Bergman's "The Seventh Seal" and "Shame" and Ichikawa's "Fires on the Plain" and passages of Kurosawa, yet we're hardly aware of the magnitude of the writer-director's conception until after we are caught up in the comedy of horror, which keeps going further and further and becoming more nearly inescapable, like "Journey to the End of the Night." With Mireille Darc and Jean Yanne. Score by Antoine Duhamel. In French.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; July 27-29.)

Wisecracks—The Canadian filmmaker Gail Singer explores the pressures on women comedians while showcasing performers ranging from Phyllis Diller, Whoopi Goldberg, and the talk-show host Jenny Jones (in her standup days) to a trio of madly inventive lip-synchers known as the Clichettes. In interviews and clips, Singer's subjects manage to be witty about everything from P.M.S. to pro-lifers, including the hostility these standups sometimes face from audiences and promoters alike. Singer doesn't pose any topic that comics like Maxine Lapiduss, Ellen DeGeneres, Sandra Shamas, Joy Behar, and Lotus Weinstock can't riff on or parody. The director has a sure sense of balance: she knows that what sounds portentous in theory can be hilarious in practice. Her movie succeeds as investigation because it also succeeds as entertainment.—M.S. (6/1/92) (Quad Cinema, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

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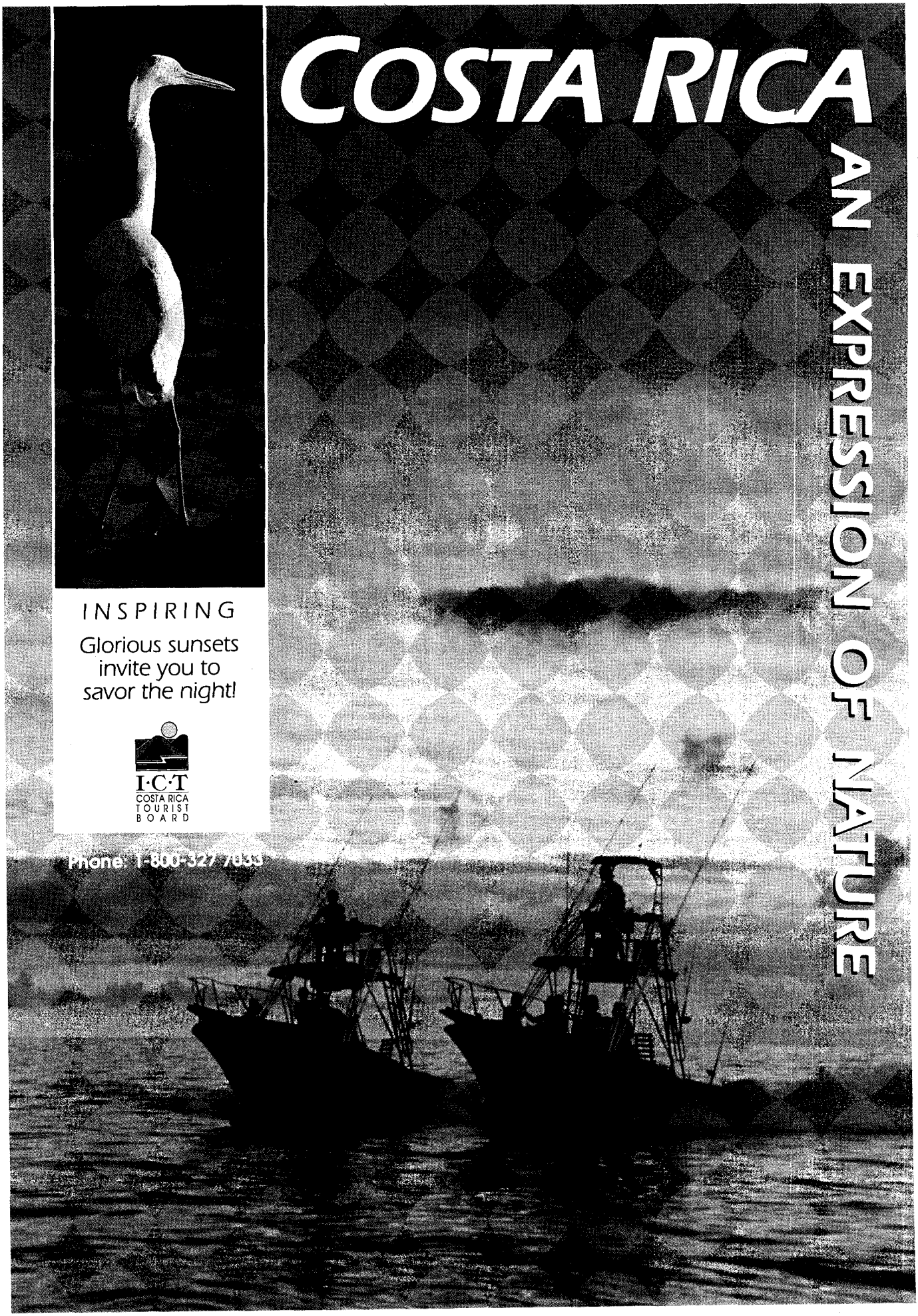

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

As political conventions go, the Democrats' gathering in New York last week was noticeably lacking in spontaneity, not to mention hard news. The nomination had been sewn up weeks in advance, and, in an orchestrated attempt to present a united front, the Party bosses had worked to settle their differences beforehand. There were no messy fights over credentials or over planks in the platform. That document—a solid, middle-of-the-road package, with nothing to offend anyone and a little something to please almost everybody, including, improbably, a salute to big business—was proposed, seconded, and accepted in no time at all, with only a perfunctory floor protest by disgruntled liberals. Jesse Jackson was dignified and supportive, and Jerry Brown, the Convention's bad boy, was kept to twenty minutes of pontificating—twenty minutes before the main show started. Even the stage had no sharp edges; a team of architects and designers had shaved all the corners into sleek, comfortable curves. It looked like the front desk of an Astaire-Rogers movie-musical hotel. The TV ratings were down, and the networks, most of which had already reduced their coverage to only an hour or two each evening, were muttering that next time they would cut back still further; some experts went as far as to suggest that in 1996 there might not even *be* a convention—or not a convention in the form that we were used to.

But good parties often take place on flimsy pretexts, and even the best parties sometimes have their stupefying stretches before finally taking off, and leaving you grateful the next morning. New York last week was host to just such a party, and occasions for civic and political joy are so few these days that we should probably think twice about never holding this kind of shindig again. A lot of conventioneering is just public pomp and silliness, of course, with politicians striking poses, and delegates in funny hats shaking those long, skinny signs in time to Sousa marches and intoning embarrassing chamber-of-commerce messages: "The great State of You-Name-It, first in good weather, first in new highway construction, proudly casts its eleven votes for the next President of the United States . . ." But there are worse things than silliness. And TV, though it is responsible for much of the overscripting and predictability of the modern political convention, is nevertheless a crucial ingredient, for TV is what makes possible the party at home, with Marge and Homer, in their pajamas, passing the channel changer back and forth, checking on what Cokie and Catherine are wearing, and comparing the insights granted to Sam Donaldson, up there in his aerie, with the vibes picked up by Dan Rather, down in the pit in his Star Trek headset, while over on the sofa the kids are rolling their eyes and moaning, "Not the Convention again! Why isn't there anything *on*?" Meanwhile, what we're remembering, and what we hope they're learning, is that politics is repetitious and boring—and essential. In the end, it wakes you up.

A convention is also the ideal forum—perhaps the only forum left—for what has proved to be a remarkably enduring form of American folk art: the political oration. In Mario Cuomo we're lucky to have one of the great practitioners of this art, and in Madison Square Garden last Wednesday evening he did not disappoint. Punchy, vivid metaphors filled his speech nominating Bill Clinton. "The ship of state is headed for the rocks," Cuomo declared. "The crew knows it. The passengers know it. Only the captain of the ship, President Bush, appears not to know it." In Cuomo's hands, the old tropes had life in them still. All over the city the next morning, at water coolers and falafel stands and subway stations and coffee shops, people were talking about this speech, savoring its high points, comparing it to memorable declamations of the past. On a more modest scale, something like this had happened on the previous mornings, too, with people, like critics after an opening night, trading notes about the stolid, earnest performance of Bill Bradley, the careful eloquence of Barbara Jordan, the banked-down fire of Jesse Jackson, and the twangy peroration of Governor Zell Miller, the new country-music star

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from Georgia. New Yorkers noticed right away that Al Gore seemed to have gone to elocution school—he'd finally learned to match his cadences to what he was *saying*. And, always touchy, they complained that Bill Clinton hadn't said a word about cities, and had gone on twenty minutes too long. But they gave him points for at least writing his own stuff, and not resorting, as Bush does, to hired guns.

In an age of sound-bites and manufactured images, it turns out, we still appreciate the real thing, the stem-winder. We're a people that likes to *orate*, and to be orated at. Perhaps more than most countries, this one was founded on speechifying, or on the feelings that lofty phrasemaking can sometimes inspire; and in hard times our leaders—Jefferson, Lincoln, F.D.R.—have somehow always found the words to help us through. Yes, they were only words—but words, after all, are how we connect to one another.

The lingering complaint about last week's Convention, and about all conventions nowadays, is that it felt simple-minded. But, for anyone watching the televised closeups of the attentive conventioneers as they listened to the speeches, it was a riveting and moving experience, the best part of the show. What we were seeing was a critical act of simplification in the making. These Democratic delegates were all politicians, to one degree or another, and so were familiar with the daunting complexities and difficulties of our society, but while they listened, each of them was clearly engaged in the old act of de-sophistication which each of us must undertake by November. They were allowing themselves to hope.

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Activist

"THERE are three issues I go back and forth on—suburbs, protectionism, and Madonna," Laura Retzler told us. "I live in the 'burbs outside Chicago, and it's nice, you know, but there's no diversity there. Protectionism—I really torture myself on that. I don't know which is right—the Gephardt position or the free-trade position. What about you? What's your stand on it?"

We mumbled something about jobs—something that clearly didn't meet the Retzler standards of political debate. Laura, who was in town for the Convention, studied us thoughtfully for a moment. A recent graduate of the University of Iowa, she has big blue-green eyes and a steady, inquiring gaze.

"Madonna?" we said.

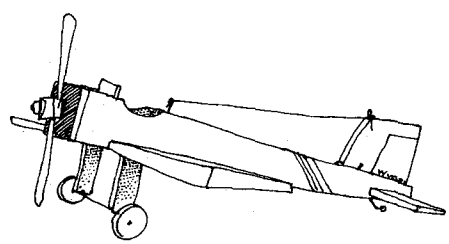
"Yes. I like that she defies sexual stereotypes, I don't like that she uses her body to manipulate men. What do you think?"

Our stand on Madonna was also weak and disappointing. Laura had caught our attention when she confronted the speakers at a gathering at the New York Hilton of the College Democrats of America on the first day of the Convention, and told a deputy political director of the Clinton campaign, "I want you to take a message to Bill Clinton—that if he wants to inspire young people he's got to do more than be right on the issues." Now, over lunch in a Thai restaurant on Eighth Avenue, we were learning that her straight-ahead style was not reserved for dealing with Party elders. We asked about her recent work for the Democrats.

"I worked on two Presidentials during the primary campaign," Laura said. "And I was devastated when the second one ended. It was the Draft Mario Cuomo movement. I worked in Chicago for him, and then I went out to New Hampshire. It was *fascinating*. I won't work for Clinton, but I'll hold my nose and vote for him."

Laura is currently busy with the Carol Moseley Braun campaign for the Senate in Illinois. Earlier that day, we had watched her work the crowd coming out of the big Women's Caucus meeting at the Hilton, shouting, "Hey! Reasonably priced Carol Moseley Braun T-shirts!" She had sold a bunch. "This is my first woman candidate," Laura told us. "Have you ever worked for a woman candidate? It's completely different. I've only worked for white males before. They were good candidates, but . . . Have you ever heard of Heather Booth? She's a god in political organizing. She's organizing our field operation."

Laura pronounced herself delighted with her first Thai meal. "I've never eaten the green part of green onions before," she admitted. When a waiter refilled her water glass, she looked up at him, smiled, raised her hand, and said "When." He looked kind of confused and alarmed.



We asked Laura how she got her start in politics. "I realized I was a Democrat in the sixth grade," she said. "They made us put our heads down and vote for President. It was 1980, and every other kid in the class voted for Reagan. I know because I peeked." Laura's first serious political passion was for Senator Paul Simon. She went to the University of Iowa, she says, largely so that she could help his Presidential Campaign prepare for the Iowa caucuses in 1988. "I spent eight months on the road organizing during my first year in college."

But enough questions about me, Laura seemed to say. What about this article we were going to write? "Will it be objective, or will it be biased, like an editorial?" she wanted to know. "Are your editors all like middle-aged white males?"

We hemmed and hawed under Laura's frank, friendly stare. She had, we noticed, strong eyebrows. They went well with her hair, which is dark and is cut very short.

When lunch was over, Laura produced a toothbrush. "I do it constantly," she confided. "It's my only neurotic habit. Everybody in the Braun campaign does it. We meet in the bathroom. I asked my dentist if it was possible to brush too much. He said no. And I got a second opinion. He said no, too."

Out on the sidewalk, we learned that this was Laura's first visit to New York. So far, she said, she loved the city. She was sleeping on a friend's sofa on East Twenty-eighth Street, and to date she had had only one bad experience. It happened while she and her friend were riding the subway at rush hour. Her friend had felt a strange hand on her backside. "But she handled it great," Laura said. "She grabbed the guy's hand, and held it up, and yelled, 'Whose hand is this? I just found it on my ass!' People laughed, and some people gave the guy real hard looks. At the next stop, he booked."

Laura had to book back to the Hilton, where a heavy schedule of Convention-related events meant a steady market for Braun-campaign stuff. We said we'd catch up with her later. When we did so, early that evening,

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we found her sitting with five other young activists on the floor of the Salon Vendome, in the Parker Meridien Hotel, assembling Carol Moseley Braun signs for use on the Convention floor. The group was discussing Tipper Gore's politics. Laura had heard Mrs. Gore testify in front of some Senate subcommittee, and had *liked* her. Laura introduced her friends—Kimberly, Sanjay, David, Jim, Greg. "Don't we look like a Benetton commercial?" Kimberly asked. "An African-American, an Asian, a Hispanic, a Jew, and"—she indicated Laura—"a white person? We *are* a Benetton."

Some time later, we found ourself in the lounge of another midtown hotel with Laura and yet another activist from the Midwest—an earnest young man named Dean Nielsen. "Jerry Brown is a wild gun," Dean declared, not altogether approvingly.

"But he's a *wonderful* wild gun," Laura said, and then turned to us. "What about the 'burbs here in New York? Are they conservative and apolitical, like the Chicago 'burbs?"

We mentioned that Long Island had a lot of Republicans.

"But Billy Joel is from Long Island," Laura said indignantly. "Aren't there a lot of liberal Italian suburbs out there?"

We tried to think of some liberal Italian suburbs.

"Not like on capital punishment, but on other stuff," Dean coaxed.

Stumped again, we asked Laura what her plans were for the next day. She rattled off a list of seminars, training sessions, caucuses, and Braun-campaign sales opportunities. "And then I'm going to a tribute to Thurgood Marshall. I have to see it. It's history." Laura smiled to herself—a pure flame of enthusiasm. Then her brow darkened. "Tomorrow morning—and I know this may be opportunistic of me—I'm going to the Illinois-delegation breakfast, because I want to see if I can get some credentials to get into Madison Square Garden tomorrow night. *I want to see Mario Cuomo nominate Bill Clinton.*"

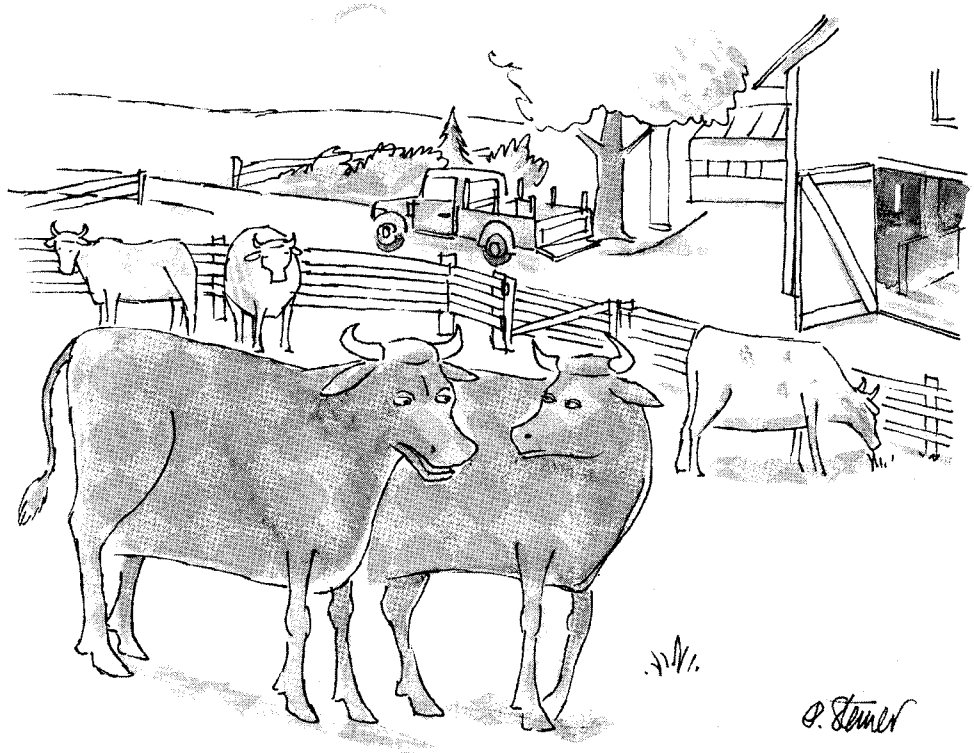
We did, too. But it wasn't the same.

Topless

WE'VE always wondered what it would be like to live in someplace like Egypt, a country with a proud and ancient civilization that was long ago conquered and quashed and is filled with relics and ruins and old, collapsing temples that tourists now flock to—mostly to survey the damage. We felt we got a little glimpse of what that might be like when the Democratic National Convention came to New York last week. During the Convention, walking the streets near Madison Square Garden, we saw lots of out-of-towners looking hot and distressed and tired and not happy to be here. And it was disconcerting, in a city that once possessed a certain grandeur, to see ingratiating signs in shop-windows that read "Welcome Conventioneers '92" and the like. On our way to the Garden, we were handed flyers telling us where we could get two manicures for the price of one, where we could get our palm read, where sushi could be had cheap, where beer and wine were complimentary with dinner. This kind of enthusiasm for tourists seems somehow beneath New York's dignity. It's how you'd expect some town in the middle of nowhere to behave.

Another sign of decline here these days is the success of anything that involves striptease. The "girls"—that's what they like to be called, or, at least, it's what they *are* called—who work as topless dancers at clubs like Stringfellow's (which is affiliated with the Pure Platinum chain) and Goldfingers (the Manhattan version of a Queens operation) can earn upward of a thousand dollars in tips on most nights. Now, we know that the Democratic Convention is not just *any* convention—it is, after all, supposed to help determine the course of electoral politics in America—but, when you get right down to it, it's basically a week-long professional conference during which a large group of people expect to have a little fun while they're away from home. In anticipation of the Convention, Stringfellow's brought in thirty extra girls, and Goldfingers had some of its dancers get into a flatbed truck and head down to Madison Square Garden to throw leaflets at Conventioneers which promised "the ultimate experience in adult entertainment."

We stopped by Stringfellow's one night after the gavel dropped. The décor was somewhere between early English drawing room and late Taj Mahal—the one in Atlantic City. Many of the men sitting at the bar had Bill Clinton buttons on (one said "Blow Bill Blow"), or had not bothered to take off their Convention credentials, or gave other evidence of being political types. (One man was dressed in a



"There's not a dime's worth of difference between the candidates. They're both carnivores."

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red-white-and-blue Uncle Sam suit, complete with top hat, for instance.) In a corner, a man sat with a tape recorder and interviewed several of the girls, who, though they were clothed for the moment, occasionally wiggled out of their dresses to show him the goods. It turned out that he was a reporter from the BBC and was doing a story about how the Convention had boosted New York's economy. He said that somebody at the Chamber of Commerce had told him that business all around the city was up thirty per cent, but before he got to the details, he was distracted by one of the girls: she said she wanted to talk and she wanted to talk *now*.

A man who called himself Tommy and wore a cowboy hat and had a deep cracker drawl watched as the BBC reporter concluded his interviews. "You know," Tommy began to say to us, "the last time New York had a Convention, back in 1968—"

We interrupted to point out that the Democrats last convened in New York in 1980.

"Well," Tommy said, "I think y'all are wrong."

Girls appeared on the main stage, two or three at a time and did a striptease routine, and then each one went from table to table, offering to do a "private" dance for a minimum tip of twenty dollars. The men weren't allowed to touch the girls at all—except to stuff money in their garter belts—and sometimes it seemed as if the whole point were to hand out money for nothing, in some strange form of financial promiscuity.

We met one young man, a clerk for a judge, whose boss was at the Convention as a delegate. The young man said that he and the judge had handed out two thousand dollars that night. We asked where a civil servant found all that money to drop on an evening's entertainment. "It's part of his salary," the young man said.

"You mean, his expense account?" we asked.

"Well, sort of—something like that."

"A slush fund?"

"Yeah, maybe that's what it is," he said.

We met two young men, one from Utah and one from New Jersey, who told us that they were members of Congress. They said that they graduated from Princeton last spring—one of them showed us his class ring—but had taken several years off from school, and that was why they were now well past twenty-five, the minimum age for serving in the House of Representatives. We asked how much money they'd given the girls, and each said only twenty dollars. That proved to us that they were dissembling; surely a *real* congressman wouldn't have been so cheap.

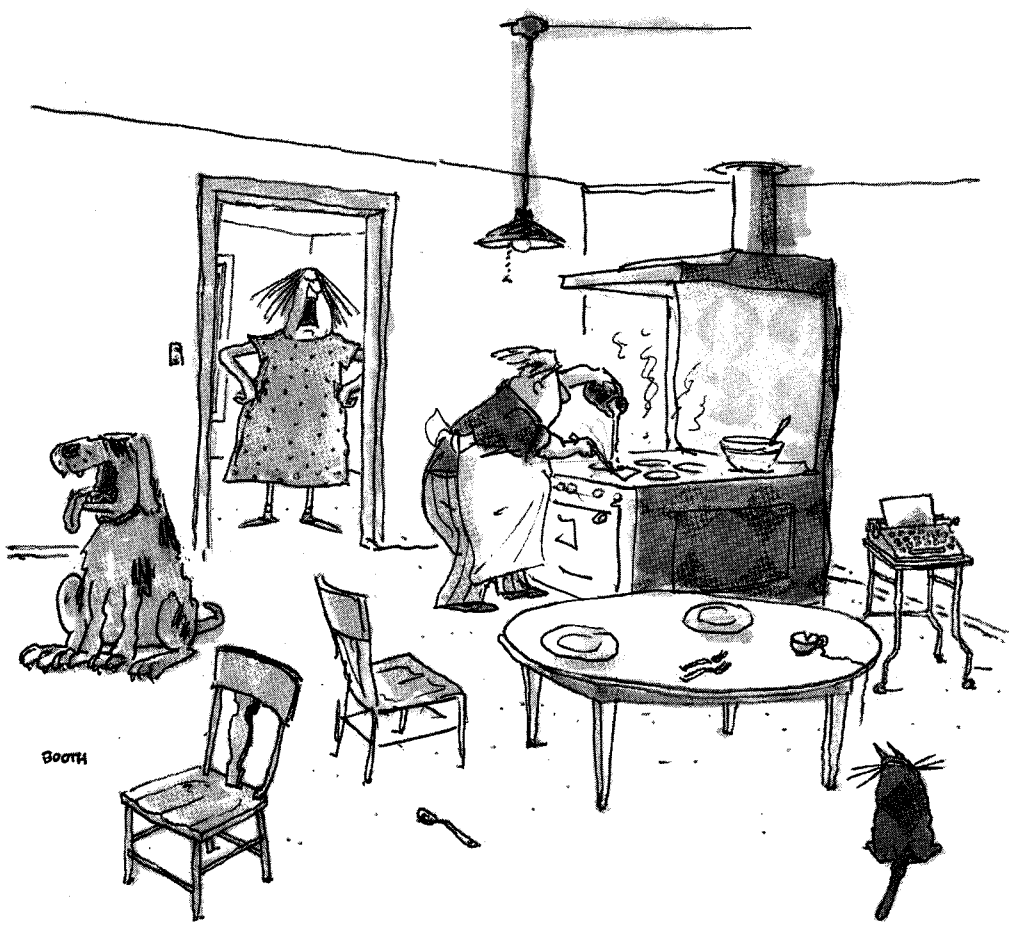
Then we met a man from one of the state delegations who was friendly in a down-home, courtly way until he realized that he was talking to a reporter. "You can't interview me," he said. "Or, anyway, you can't use my name."

"Why not?" we asked.

"Well, see, this here is a topless bar," he said. "And back home I introduced legislation to close down topless bars. So you can see that this wouldn't look too good."

We tried to ask some of the girls if they had been particularly busy, what with the Convention, and all, but none of them wanted to stop and talk for very long, because time is money. Sandy, an elegant blonde, did tell us that she'd been brought up to New York from one of the Pure Platinum clubs in the South, and that she didn't talk to her customers enough to find out whether they were there for the Convention or were just stopping by after a late night at the office. "Besides," she said, "the air-conditioner broke down tonight, so we're all really hot, and nobody has the energy to dance or talk, or anything. Normally, it takes me at least three songs to get out of my dress, but tonight it's so hot I just want to take the thing off and get it over with."

We hadn't noticed that it was particularly warm in Stringfellow's, but suddenly it seemed unbearably stuffy. We headed for the door, and on the way we ran into a young man with Clinton-campaign credentials on a string around his neck. He handed a large bill to one of the dancers sitting on the bar, and she swivelled around and stuffed the bill in her garter belt. "You've got to give these girls a lot of money," the young man



"I'm getting a little itchy to redo the bedroom!"

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said. "They work hard. They deserve it. It's the democratic thing to do."

Choices

THE hot object at the Convention was the Monet Jewelers donkey pin included in the gift packages at the "New York Is Fashion" fashion show in Central Park. The donkey is about two inches long and gold-tone, and is wearing a top hat and a jewelled saddle blanket and a little tag saying "COMPLIMENTARY GIFT—NOT FOR RESALE." A not hot object was a sterling-silver donkey ring—no top hat, no saddle blanket, no resale prohibition—available for $49, plus New York sales tax, at the Pride in America trade show at the Hilton. The designer of the silver donkey is Belinda Pennington, of Designs by Belinda, in Albuquerque. "I came all the way from New Mexico to sell to these cheap Democrats," Ms. Pennington said one afternoon during the Convention. "I was told no one was doing a designer donkey, so I decided to do a designer donkey, but I've hardly sold any. I've also done a pewter donkey—more of a fun one, that has beautiful details all over, with a little '92' stamped on it. This is gorgeous stuff, and no one is buying it. Have I ever done it before? No. Will I do it again? No. Except, in August I will go to the Republican Convention, because they have more money and more interest in designer things."

For lunch, the hot reservation was the $19.92 special at Le Cirque: it sold out almost as soon as it was announced —the week before the Convention opened. Less hot was McDonald's $3.99 Welcome Dems Meal Deal$ Extra Value Combo Meal, which included any sandwich, large French fries, and a medium-size soft drink: it remained available throughout the Convention. "I can't really tell you anything about the meal," a spokesperson for McDonald's told us. "It's probably something meant to take advantage of politics. Other than that, I can only say it's our usual fine food."

The OTB Instant Track booth, the Network Letter folders booth, and the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government booth at the Hilton were deserted, but the *Quayle Quarterly* booth was busy. Joe Fodor, an associate editor of the *Quarterly*, was showing the magazine and a book "What a Waste It Is to Lose One's Mind: The Unauthorized Autobiography of Dan Quayle" to an appreciative group of Mississippi delegates. Eric Lazarus, who met the *Quarterly's* founders at a yoga retreat a few months ago, was helping out. "Quayle's been an annuity for these guys," Mr. Lazarus said.

"I'm not too worried about going under if the Republicans are voted out of office," Mr. Fodor added. "We've put all our profits into real estate, so we're good until at least the next century."

Clear-plastic credential holders ($2 in the lobby of the Ramada) were selling well. "What's Cookin' With the Democrats," a collection of favorite recipes of Democratic senators, governors, representatives, and notables ($15 at the Hilton), was not. "First of all, I should mention that this was really my mother's idea, not mine," Doug Chapman, of Chapman Publications, the cookbook's publishers, told us. "I'm her son, so her son is helping out. Secondly, not every single person in the book is an elected person. We also have some retired officeholders, and people like Ronald Brown." Mr. Chapman flipped through the cookbook for us, pointing out Mario Cuomo's Big Apple Mousse; Representative Carroll Hubbard, Jr.,'s (D-KY) Cheesy Spinach Quiche; and a recipe for Tomato Soup Date and Nut Cake from Mary Rose Oakar (D-OH). "Here's one I especially like," he said. "Governor Waihee of Hawaii's Ono Banana Bread, which is really fabulous. I've made it a million times. I suppose I have Governor Waihee to blame for about twenty extra pounds."

It turns out that Chapman Publications has also produced a second cookbook, "What's Cookin' with the Republicans," which Mr. Chapman intends to sell at the Republican convention next month. For the moment, though, he was keeping it discreetly stacked behind the Democratic display. "I think that's only fair, considering where we are," he said. "But it's absolutely a quality volume, too. We got some delicious contributions from most of the big Republicans, although I'm sorry to say President Bush declined."

"At least I'm an enigma to your relatives."

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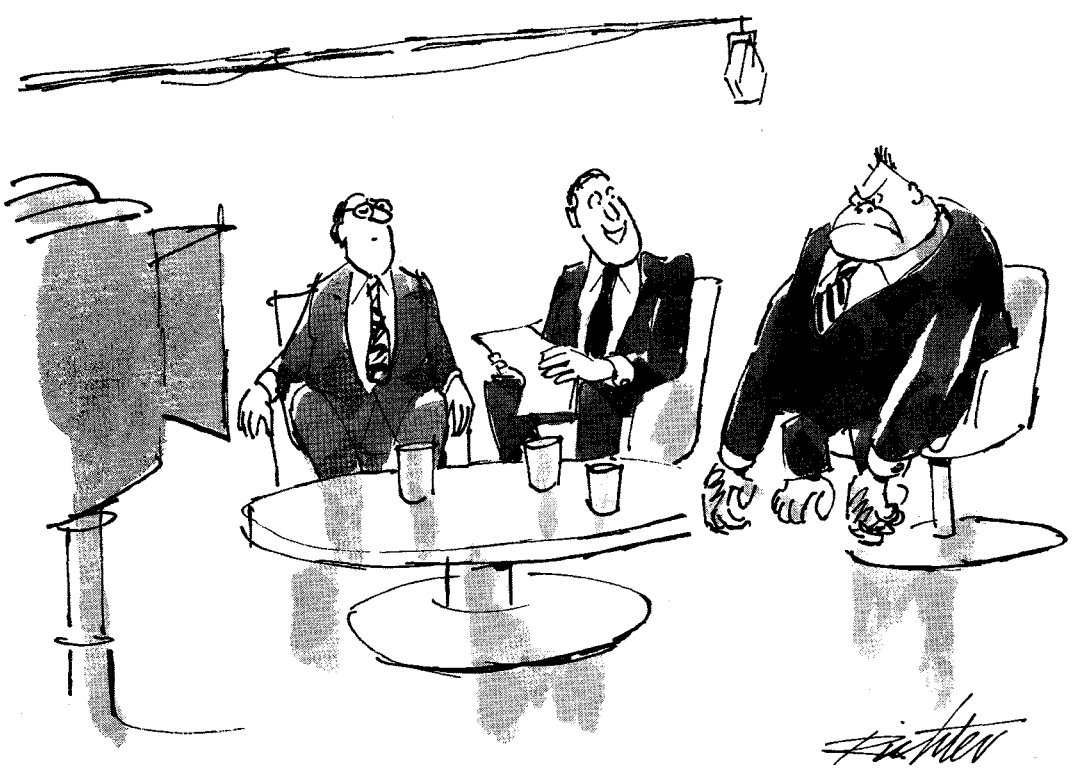
BABY'S FIRST STEP

Glenn Morrissey had been a faithful husband until, at the age of thirty-six, he broke his leg playing touch football on the Mall in Washington, D.C.; he was a lawyer employed by the Bureau of Weights and Measures. A heavy young black man had been standing on the sidelines, watching the scrimmage of lawyers and lobbyists and bureaucrats, who each fall Sunday assembled down near the Hirshhorn for their afternoon tussle, and since he seemed to be alone, and the sides were uneven, he was invited to play. Assigned to cover Glenn on an out-and-in buttonhook-pass pattern, he slipped on the soft earth and fell against Glenn's braced leg as the ball spiralled toward them. Glenn heard the bone pop—a muscle-muffled snap. But the young man picked himself up and scrambled back to the defensive huddle without even an apology, and it took a while for the other players to believe that Glenn, still lying there astonished, was truly injured and could no longer play. He hopped off the field and induced a close friend, Bud Jorgeson, a red-bearded specialist in ethnic art for the Smithsonian Institution, to help him hop the two blocks down Seventh Street to his parked car. Glenn drove it back one-footed to his home, a neocolonial of powdery brick with a sideways view of Rock Creek Park. His wife, Stacey, was out back, giving the roses their fall pruning; she laughed when she saw him hopping toward her and heard his aggrieved voice cry out, "Look what those bad boys did to me!" It was only an hour later, after a trip to Sibley Hospital and a reading of his X-rays, that she took his injury seriously. His right tibia had been fractured vertically, with a messy involvement of the tibial plateau that would necessitate an operation, a week in the hospital, and three months in a cast.

Still, Glenn didn't consciously hold Stacey's underreaction against her—she was right; he was a boyish hypochondriac who had cried wolf too often—or the fact that that very night, with him settled and doped in his hospital bed, she went alone to a cocktail party at the Romanian Embassy, where the hors d'oeuvres were famously lavish. He no more had it in him to blame his wife for anything than he would blame himself; he knew her from the inside out—every motive, every reaction—just as he knew himself. In fact, he found her *more* predictable than he did his own self, which still had some depths and twists that took him unawares. You land, it seemed to him, on the shore of your own being in total innocence, like an explorer who was looking for something else, and it takes decades to penetrate inland, and map the mountain passes, and trace the rivers to their sources. Even then, there are large blanks, where monsters roam.

Being hospitalized, for the first time in his life—measuring out in pills his capacity for pain, sleeping on his back, submitting his most intimate functions to the care and scrutiny of nurses, becoming intensely, solicitously conscious of his own body, and doing all the forced entertaining, of doctors and visitors, that a hospital patient must do—opened up a new side of his being, a new stretch of potential; he took it all pretty well, was his verdict on himself. He was less of a sissy than he had thought. And then he endured being on crutches, learning to do without his hands, to carry his papers and possessions in a canvas tote bag while keeping his grip on the sponge-wrapped rungs of the crutches while he levered himself up and down stairs. He compressed, as it were, his physical activity, at home and the office, into a restricted yet still effective mold—a smaller, more thankful version of his previous life, which had been lived without proper contemplation of the miraculous powers of his body.

The late-winter day came when his orthopedist removed the last of a series of gray, itchy, odorous, scribbled-upon casts and pronounced him whole again. Glenn could hardly believe, even though he had taken a few experimental steps in the doctor's office, that he was free to walk on no more support than his own fallible bones. It felt illicit. He felt, without the crutches, dizzyingly tall, and oddly vaporous below the waist. He was floating, he was gliding, and when he stepped into the waiting room he thought the other patients were looking up at him as if at a monster, a man on stilts. "Baby's first step," he joked, to a woman whose



"And now, speaking against the theory of evolution . . ."

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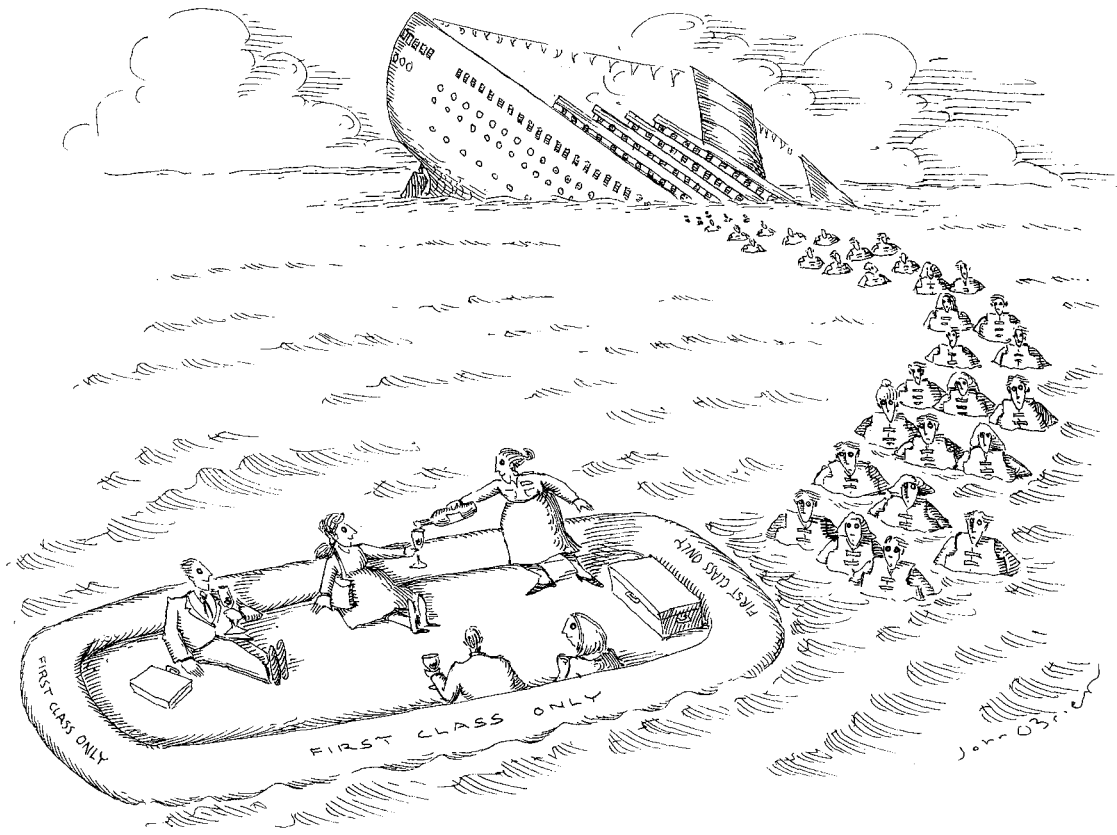
stare seemed especially nonplussed. But her expression remained stupid, and he realized that she didn't see anything extraordinary about him—just a man walking on his own two legs, as most men do.



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THAT night, he and Stacey had a dinner party to attend, at the home of one of the bureau's chief calibrators; as Glenn stepped into the house he seemed still to be miraculously gliding, like Fred Astaire across a polished ballroom floor. He kissed his hostess with particular warmth; he was back among the living, the ambulatory. The party seemed to be his coming-out party, and he the belle of the evening, to whom everything, as to Shakespeare's Miranda, was new. The unknown woman in finespun, metallic red sitting next to him at the dinner table was, he realized, alive just as he was; her thorax held the same complex of arteries and veins pounding with blood, clean and unclean, bluish and bright.

"Do I know you?" he asked her, sliding into his chair.

"We met in the living room." Her smile was dazzling, in a lipstick that also seemed metallic. "I'm the wife of your host's brother. We're from the Midwest."

"The Midwest is a big place."

Vast areas seemed to lie all about him, waiting to be explored. This woman contained patches of ambivalence and vacancy, he realized. We all hold uncertainties yearning to be clarified. There is more play in the human situation than he had dreamed.

"The Minneapolis–St. Paul area," she said.

"Twin Cities," he said, pleased with himself. "I love the way people from there pronounce it—so quickly, all those syllables. How do you stand the winters?"

"We have skyways. Our feet never touch the snow."

There was a sparkle, a shimmer, to the skin of her face, its microscopic epidermal grain, as well as to her red dress and her lipstick. Even the transparent fuzz on her upper lip sparkled as it lifted in the tension of a smile. He felt her rising to the challenge his inner space presented to her; she somehow sensed, he was convinced, his recent initiation, via suffering, into a freemasonry of exploration and exchange. Their conversation, as the courses came and went by candlelight and the wineglasses were rhythmically refilled, became so heated that they had to keep reminding themselves to turn to the dinner partner on their other side, for courtesy's sake. Her knee momentarily rested against his healed knee without apparent awareness; to emphasize a point she smartly tapped the back of his hand. How delightful she was, how miraculously quick to perceive and respond, to parry and thrust! As they sat side by side at the table, Glenn kept picturing their two chests full of pumping blood, barrels brimming with mystery.

"Are you in Washington for long?"

"The National Gallery and all those others—I could be happy here forever! But I must fly back tomorrow, on United at eleven-forty. Rod is going on to New York on business first thing in the morning. Our twelve-year-old daughter takes riding lessons and is doing dressage in a show and would never forgive me if I weren't there. You know how it is—one of those moments that won't come again."

"I know," he said, not sure he did.

The next day, on the excuse of some research at the Library of Congress, he took a taxi to National Airport to see her off. Dressed in a trim travelling suit, carrying a small navy-blue overnight bag whose many-compartmented capacity was left limp by her gossamer party clothes, she did not seem surprised to see him. In the human clutter of the quaint old airport, with its spaces and shops like those of a railroad terminal, and its traffic of robed and sandalled visitors from all points of the globe, they walked back and forth, Glenn still marvelling at the ease with which his healed leg carried him. With every step, he seemed to be floating. The caged volume of her chest hung beside his; they had their arms about each other's waists like teen-agers lounging back from the beach. As they walked, he carried her bag, which seemed weightless, and she talked about her children's activities—the girl's equestrian lessons, and the two boys' hockey practices, which took place at ungodly hours at a distant rink. "The

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sacrifices one makes! But you *must*, because some day they will be gone." The message was clear: she was committed, her life was a thousand miles away. The lapel of her travelling suit held a small brooch of cloisonné enamel, like a badge of membership in a society whose insignia he could not quite make out.

He thought of kissing her, but here, in this international clutter, this traffic, it would have been awkward; it was enough to have her head beside his shoulder, so close he could smell on her the morning dew of her face lotion. She was nervous about missing the plane, and he should be in his office. At the first boarding call, they reported to her gate; he passed her feather-light suitcase into her hand; they hugged, pressing their chests together; he bent his face to her shoulder and kissed the padded cloth. "Will you forget me?" her voice asked hurriedly in his ear.

"Why would I do that?"

"You'll have all those others."

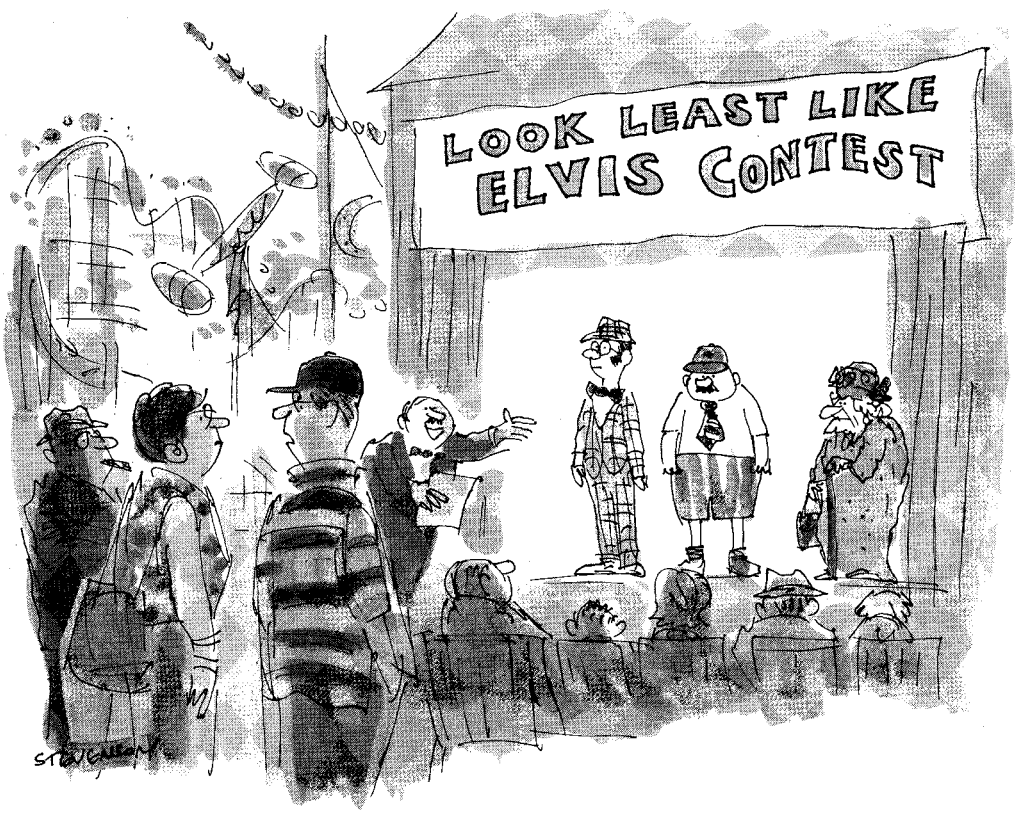
"What others?" he asked.

"You'll see." She backed off adroitly and melted into the boarding line; Glenn missed some of the expressive nuances of her darting, apologetic farewell gestures, for his eyes, amazingly, had mustered tears. More gratifying still, in the few seconds of their embrace he had felt behind his fly the furtive pang of an erection commencing. He was alive, he was full of passion—a barrel waiting to be tapped.

THEY never met again; she had been a false dawn. Perhaps every major campaign in life needs a false start, a dry run, a resetting of the compass. Riding lessons in Minneapolis were a mere obstructive detail; the possibilities had been established. In the carnival of Washington, with its constant demonstrations, its litter of yesterday's placards, its picketing maniacs and widespread dangerous neighborhoods, there is room for romance, for anarchic adventure. All those women, the wives underemployed and the employed women usually single, and all those demure side streets, frothy with flowering azalea and cherry, and the constant parties, and the seething undercurrent of political gossip, of discontent, of official turnover and hoped-for advancement. War is a well-known aphrodisiac, and Washington is always at war. As the men rise and fall on the ladders of power, women are stimulated to take chances. The touch of Southern indolence in the air helps; Los Angeles and New York, by comparison, are too much in love with their work; sex, like lunch, is harnessed to business.

Stacey's best friend was a similarly lean, attractive, exercise-and-cause-conscious mother of two, named Andrea Jorgeson. Bud was her husband; he travelled to Third World countries for the Smithsonian, bringing back sculptures made mostly, it seemed, of hair and straw. Andrea had seemed to Glenn rather opaque and standardized hitherto; now, as he turned upon her the powerful beam of his new knowledge—we are all full of warm darkness, unformed and inquisitive—her bones began to glow. It was a simple series of knight's moves, on the chessboard of L'Enfant's city plan: to give her his ear at a party or two (his head bowed like that of a doctor listening to her heartbeat with a stethoscope), and then to indicate with a minute pressure of his hand during a fund-raising ball that a certain unspoken path was open, and then to suggest that, now that her children were both in boarding school and she was working toward a Ph.D. at Georgetown University, she write a paper, with his help, on the failure of metrication in the United States; from there it was a few pushed pawns to lunches à deux downtown, and finally to his afternoon infiltration of her home and occupation of her bed. Bud was off in Mali and Chad, dodging civil wars.

Glenn had been in the Jorgesons' house many times, as a married guest of the couple, but had never seen it in the quiet of the day, as a possessor of sorts. These chairs and tables, curtains and rugs had all been selected and tended by a sensibility akin to Stacey's yet distinctly other. The bathroom had little beribboned jars of potpourri set about, and pink toilet paper with a quilted texture, and a padded seat to match, and a long-handled brush and a loofah on the sill where the bathtub met the tiles, so he felt invited to picture Andrea scrubbing and buffing herself to a subepithelial rosiness, within a sloshing pond of suds. The tub and sink were of some black substance like polished slate or lava, and large mirrors here and there made the sight of one's naked body unavoidable.



"I think the Elvis business has just about run its course."

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Andrea was a closet sybarite, just as Stacey was a closet ascetic, though seeing the two women side by side at a lunch table one would think them identical.

Andrea fancied not the prim pastel bed linen Stacey preferred but splashy, hot-colored floral patterns and provided once, in his honor, purple satin sheets, which were disconcertingly slippery, the pillows squirting out from under their bodies like greased pigs. On the walls, even in the bedroom, hairy, hollow-eyed masks stared down, and on bookshelves and tabletops carved fertility symbols thrust buttocks in one direction and breasts in the other. The violence of the African artifacts made Glenn slightly uncomfortable; Andrea's absent husband seemed to be present in them, staring through the eyeholes of grimacing masks.

Strange to say, part of the bliss of Andrea's house was leaving it behind. He would slip out the back door, stride quickly, meaningfully along the side of the house like a meter reader up from the basement, and, with relaxing breath, walk the slant sidewalk to his car, parked for discretion's sake in the next block of hushed Washington homes—their gables politely looking the other way, their neoclassic porchlets void of daytime visitors, their walls of powdery or painted brick and their plantings both lush and trimmed conspiring with him to keep his secret, as he, a white man in a business suit, exercised his American right to walk where he wished.

One day after three months of such visits, he must, in his postcoital relaxation, have confided something admiring about the décor, because Andrea said, with a jarring vehemence, "God, if Bud brings back one more Ashanti fertility doll or Bambara antelope headdress, I think I'll scream. I honestly think I might leave him if he gets any more African."

Glenn was jarred because he wanted to think that Andrea's marriage, like his own, was basically happy. "Really?"

"Really. What I'm *really* scared he's going to bring back from these trips is AIDS. The whole continent is lousy with it. I'm terrified of him."

"But—do you think he . . . ?"

He didn't finish; she snorted at his delicacy. "People do," she said, her angry gesture taking in their naked bodies, on the wrinkled sheet, with its dangerous-looking pattern of red roses and green thorns. "It's human nature."

"You know, that didn't come home to me until I broke my leg last year." He went on, as if selling her husband back to her, "Bud was so nice that day; he was the only one who cared. Not even Stacey cared." It had happened in the fall; this was May, on the verge of uncomfortable summer heat; soon people would be leaving the District for the mountains, for the shore. "Where would you go if you left him?"

The question was idle, but her answer was not. Andrea propped herself up on an elbow to give it. Though they had closed the venetian blinds, the bedroom was still bright, the sharp spring sunlight clamoring at the windows like a noisy pack of children. Her face—her fine, lean, well-cared-for face, with tiny wrinkles that sun damage and chronic social animation had engraved at the corners of her eyes and mouth—confronted him with that female openness and depth of interrogation which remind men of the dark, of the ocean, of the night sky, of everything swallowing and frightening. But her manner of speaking was girlish, embarrassed, offhand. "With you somewhere?" She primly wrapped the top of the sheet around her breasts and settled her mussed fair head back on the pillow to hear his answer.

Again, there was a muffled snap. He had entered more new territory, barren stretches of disappointment and recrimination, under skies gray with tears. He tried to picture it—her in a house of his, them in a house of theirs—and couldn't. What he liked possessing was a woman's possessions—her clothes, her blue overnight bag, her distant daughter's riding lessons, her husband's appointment calendar, her exotic black-tubbed bathroom, her entire *nest*. What he wanted was for women to stay put, planted in American plenty, while he ambulated from one to the other with no more baggage than the suit on his back and the car keys in his pocket. In the years to come, long after Andrea had sunk back angrily into her nest of roses and hairy masks, Glenn experienced a light-headed bliss whenever his feet glided across an illicit threshold, on what felt like stilts.

—JOHN UPDIKE

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PARACHUTE SILK

ALL right then, I'll make a list, one list with two separate headings: Things I Will Never Do, and Things I Would Never Do. The Things I Will Never Do preserve my sense of sorrow; the Things I Would Never Do preserve my sense of dignity. My sense of humor preserves itself, like a ghastly, encephalic curio sitting on a dusty shelf in the pitch-black basement of some madman's antique store. I wouldn't give it up, though, and you can put that under the Would Never heading—leaving space above it, naturally, for the more important things, like murder or boinking your best friend's sweetheart.

The Will Never list is much longer than the Would Never; almost anything can give me an idea for an item. The red silk parachute that Matthew left on the porch, for instance, reminds me that I Will Never jump out of an airplane, but that's a doubleheader—I Would Never jump out of an airplane, either. It's a conscious decision, one of the easier ones I've had to make. What kind of person would do that, and what do they get out of it, except a sense of relief when the thing opens correctly?

I'm already relieved, thank you, and—considering what I've done to myself—happy to be alive, if somewhat cranky in the mornings. I'm cranky in the mornings because at night, when I turn out my lights, when, according to my recovery counsellor, you're supposed to concentrate on positive, relaxing images, what I get instead is a sort of cavalcade of hits: Gloria's Most Painful and Embarrassing Moments on Parade. It's especially bad if I remember all the times I made a fool of myself when I was drunk. Once that starts, I can be up for hours, snapping, "Go away," to my memories. Just imagine some woman you saw in a bar once, hair tumbled and greasy, eye makeup hopeful the day before yesterday, loudly tossing inappropriate remarks into the closed circles of other people's conversations. Her charming and incisive bons mots land on the floor with an unpleasant splat, as if someone had just hurled a dead frog to the ground at your feet; you turn around, and there she is, smiling like the belle of the ball. If you wish she'd just go away, believe me, so do I. Here in Minnesota, Land of Ten Thousand Treatment Centers, they've got a program for any addiction you might care to name, but memories are something they can't do all that much about.

I didn't last that long as a rowdy drunkard, and when I switched to opiates at least I quieted down. In fact, I should quiet down right now and look over this list, which has got a little bit out of control. As a list, however, it's typical of me—Glory at her most self-centered, self-involved, self-pitying, and a list of other terms that start with my favorite word, "self."

MY counsellor had told me to put down a list of things that had to do with Matthew, who left the red parachute on my porch—what I felt good about, what I felt bad about. I've been out of the halfway house for over a year, but I still take my counsellor's advice. If this list isn't quite what she had in mind, it's because I've always had a creative approach to advice-taking. Well, for the moment I reject creativity; I'll just do what they say—Get Honest, Talk About My Feelings.

What I feel most strongly at this moment is a desire not to think or talk about Matthew. His name said aloud embarrasses me. It's like something that happened when I was six or seven, when I was playing with puppets in the office of one of the innumerable kiddies' shrinks my baffled and worried parents were sending me to. Because the puppets were birds, I was putting them into a nest. The shrink looked at me and said, "You know, Gloria, why you're doing that? Because you want a nest, too. You want someplace where you can feel safe and warm." I was overcome with revulsion—I felt as if he'd just stuck his hand up my dress—and I decided I hadn't heard his comment. I'm bringing up that little childhood idyll to illustrate how the name Matthew makes me feel at this very moment. But I'm too big a girl now to go on playing with puppets, pretending not to hear something.

To make myself really uncomfortable, I could make a list of the things I valued about Matthew. The first was his lack of glamour. When we began to spend time together in the occupational-therapy room of Sunrise House, I remember thinking that if I had not been an addict I would never be there, hanging out with some dark, overweight guy who wore sandals and socks like a tourist from the Netherlands. Never even mind the sweaters his mother sent him.

In the program, we had to make lists of our own character defects. There were certainly some things I despised about myself. Two of these were a desire to be liked and a desire to be glamorous. Matthew told me that my desire to be glamorous was only the made-for-TV version of my desire to be liked, but he didn't quite get what I was saying; I had trouble explaining to him how much I loathed my own idea of what constituted glamour. That idea was by no means an unusual one: like so many other kids gone wrong from my time, place, and class, I thought it glamorous to be self-destructive. Unfortunately, I had also always known that this was a stupid and callow way to think. I knew that self-destruction was a vile method of slumming; I knew that there were people who got destroyed whether or not they wanted to be. Here was Glory, beloved baby girl of professional parents, going into neighborhoods her great-grandfather had worked all his life to get his family out of, sniffing around for heroin, the opiate of the people. Marie Antoinette in her little peasant dress, Glory in her leather jacket. I knew all this, and yet I couldn't stop. Matthew had other reasons for being unable to stop, but eventually we both couldn't stop simply because we could not stop, and we wound up in the O.T. room pouring out molds of ceramic owls—lucky for us. I say "lucky" because I'm not so far gone that I don't know there are *many, many worse places to end up*, and worse things to have to do than Occupational Therapy.

Matthew looked to me like all the kids nobody would socialize with in school—and I had certainly been one of them. As a penance for ever having wanted to hang out with the cool kids, I attached myself to him. We stayed up as late as we could, drinking decaf

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out of plastic-foam cups and listening to Matthew's compilation tapes on the tape recorder we sneaked out of the office. The white fluorescent lamps overhead would hum, and eventually a night staffer would tell us to get to our rooms.

The staff told me to try to make friends with more women. I was a little insulted that they thought I hung out with Matthew because I couldn't get anybody better-looking to have an exclusive relationship with. Matthew would make me a tape every week, of songs from other tapes. From his selection of songs I would know, or think I knew, how he was feeling. How much did I really know, I wonder, about anything? I was thirty pounds overweight from the methadone I'd been on before and the antidepressants they had me on then. Between those and my AZT, I could hardly find my butt with both hands, as the old-timers like to say.

Eventually I became more lucid, and ready for the outside world. Matthew did, too; armed with the Twelve Steps and our newly acquired Tools for Living, we graduated from the residence within days of each other. Matthew had asked me to come back to the House for his ceremony and to be the one to give him his graduation medallion. But I was too busy: I'd dropped that thirty pounds by then and met a boy. At that point a boy wasn't much use to me, because of what I liked to call "my health status," but I was as excited as if every night were my first boy-girl movie date. If I kept things at that first-night level, I would not have to talk seriously with any boy about the risk of transmission; no one has to talk about condoms on a first date when she's sober.

Anyway, I sent Matthew a note instead. It was a charming note, of course, but so what? Put that on a list of things I would like to have among my memories but don't: giving Matthew his graduation medallion.

MATTHEW was back at work two weeks after he got out. He had that going for him: he might not have been the guy to get into the V.I.P. lounge at some glitter-trash night club, but he was fit for the aspects of life that I feared the most. While I bounced around among different service jobs, learning how to complete tasks and show up on time, Matthew was working at InfoSystem, as a computer-repair trouble-shooter. He'd worked for the head office in Detroit, and when he went into treatment his boss had got his insurance to pay for the cushiest among the many chemical-dependency centers that dot the Minnesota landscape. They'd held his position for him, then found him a transfer slot in the Cities. That was the kind of addict Matthew was: he'd used for five years before anybody was wise to him, and he was so good at his job that they overlooked the funds he'd fiddled. I admired him for his control, never having had any to speak of myself.

He said to me, "There's a lot of things about you that I admire, too, but they're probably not the things you would admire about yourself."

Some people don't like to be praised; apparently it makes them uncomfortable. I am not one of them. I like praise, and I like my praise specific, so I asked him, "What? What things?"

"I admire your ability to be someone I know well. That's not something I can do that easily—be someone anybody knows well."

Matthew's job was to drive around the Cities to various InfoSystem offices and help them fix their computers when they went down, which they did on a daily basis. Around lunchtime he was usually parked in his blue office-issue van near the capitol. I was doing phone-survey work in a place right there on Rice and Marion, so I'd step into his van and we'd eat sandwiches together in the front seat.

Usually our conversations were interrupted when Matthew's car phone buzzed and he had to talk some panicked office employee through the steps needed to get the system back up. "Do you have your system disk?" he would ask, his voice like sleep. Then, never altering the comforting lack of expression in his tone, he'd take them through all the logical procedures. "If anything else comes up, call me right back," he'd say, then he'd hang up the phone, looking away at the clumpy little skyline of downtown St. Paul.

"Do you have to do that on your lunch hour?" I asked him once, feeling

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foolish because I'd been in the middle of an animated bout of storytelling when the call came in.

"They're so scared when the system goes down," he said. "They're afraid they'll lose their jobs. I'm supposed to report all the calls, but I don't."

One evening in late March, Matthew showed up at my door with his latest compilation tape and a bundle of things that he'd found in the closet of his new apartment. One of the things was the red silk parachute. "I thought you might want to use it for a bedspread, or a curtain," he said. "It reminds me of you."

In an uncharacteristic spasm of self-restraint, I didn't ask why. Instead, I suggested we take it outside on the porch.

It was windy that night, and not too cold—a miracle in Minnesota, where spring doesn't come until the very last minute. The next-door kids were still outside, clanking around on their one bike for the half-dozen of them. Looking down Dayton Avenue, Matthew and I could see the cathedral, with its oxidized-green dome looking like jade in the moon-white floodlights. The real moon floated above it, courteous and pale and distant, as a Minnesota moon would be. We held the chute over the side of the porch and the wind took it up with a definite, firm *thunk*. The red silk flew out, and we could feel it straining at our hands; it leaped and danced, like a flag. I had the feeling for a moment that we were sailing, Matthew and I, up over the cathedral. We weren't, of course, and it wasn't really warm, so we went back inside. That's on the list for my counsellor, that evening.

Another reason I valued Matthew was his honesty. Every single member of his family was in what is ominously referred to as "the program." They were in different branches of it, all over the country—branches that seemed to be growing and multiplying at a dazzling rate of speed: Overeaters Anonymous, Spenders Anonymous, Parents or Adult Children of Alcoholics Anonymous, Clutterers Anonymous, Love Addicts Anonymous, and, my personal favorite, Emotions Anonymous.

Matthew said to me, "Sometimes I get so sick of all this health."

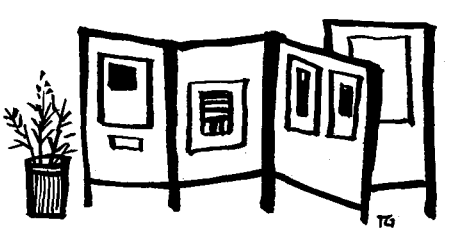
I asked him if he wasn't grateful to be alive, didn't he want to live and be well. Standard party line, but sometimes it's all there is to work with.

"I am sometimes," he said. "But sometimes I'm not. Sometimes I have no gratitude at all."

I liked hearing that. That first six months, there were an awful lot of people I met who talked the talk, all the time. Their faces seemed to glow, and they'd go on about so-and-so "getting it," "getting" the program, having that much-touted aura of serenity about them. It was my experience that such persons usually relapsed and stole their roommate's stereo equipment, or charged five thousand dollars' worth of lingerie at Carson Pirie Scott. Nobody gives up an addiction that easily, or it wouldn't be an addiction, just a problem. But it was easy to talk the talk. Everyone praised you and loved you to pieces if you could talk the talk. So Matthew's bleak words did not make me, as they say, "concerned." I just thought that in his own way he was braver than a lot of us and saying what we all were thinking. Besides, if there was anybody who tried to work those twelve Simple Steps for Complicated People it was him.

That might have been one of the reasons I didn't get too concerned about his sex-addiction thing—pornography and prostitutes. I just didn't think the boy needed another Twelve-Step Program, and, to be honest, I refused to see what was so terrible about it. I just thought it was sad and creepy, but my frame of reference, when it came to men, told me that most men were, at heart, sad and creepy. He didn't beat the women up, he didn't harm them, so what was the need for yet another Anonymous group? Anyway, some men were just born to be customers: that's what a friend of mine, a former working girl, told me when I mentioned it. She is very tough, that woman is, the way I've always wanted to be.

The truth is, I thought it was funny when I found the stack of magazines in his bathroom. They were a little on the severe side, with piston shots and all the rest of it, but not the worst I'd ever seen. When I first got out of the House, I'd worked in a bookstore that had an adult section. At first, when I was sorting the magazines for stacking, I had looked at the glossy pictures, but they quickly grew boring; not a lot interested me in those early days except thinking about drugs. Certainly not sex, except as a possible means for procuring drugs, in case I decided to relapse. Matthew, though, when he realized he'd forgotten to remove the magazines from the bathroom, acted as if I'd found some kind of forensic evidence. The color went right out of his face, and I could see what he



THE EXODUS OF PEACHES

The new peach trees are bandaged
like the legs of stallions.

You can read the bark
over the tape's white lip

where its russet Braille
is peeling. The peaches hang

in their green cupolas,
cheeks stained with twilight,

the wind stencilled on velvet
livery. What a traffic

of coaches without wheels,
of bells without tongues!

Far off the barn doors
open, close,
open, close.
An argument,

both sides swinging.
The blue tractor zippers the field

and disappears behind slatted boxes
like weathered shingles, stained

with peach juice.
I stood under peaches

clumped close as barnacles,
loyal as bees,

and picked one
from the only life it knew.

—Nancy Willard

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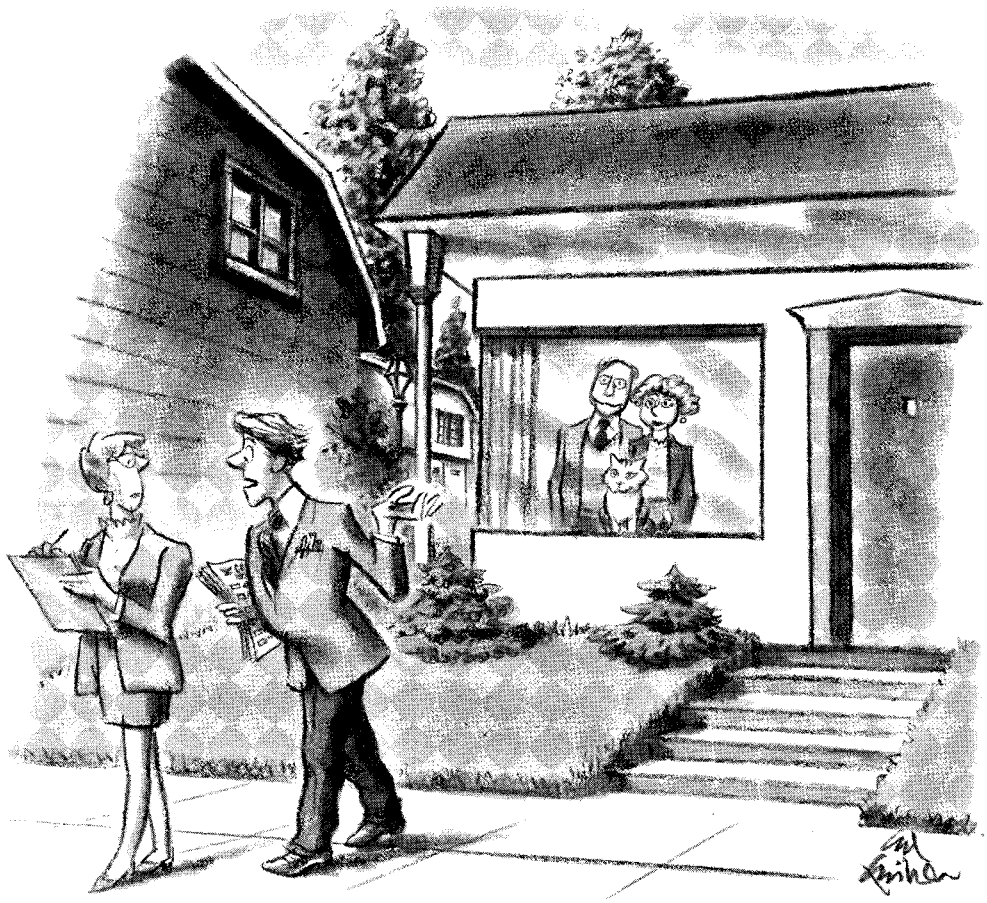
looked like when he was thinking up a lie. "They're my roommate's," he said.

It didn't seem like a big deal to me. But, seeing his pale, granite face, I realized that there was about two hundred dollars' worth of pornography stacked up in his pink-tiled bathroom. I went back in there before I left, and surreptitiously checked the dates: the magazines were all new, the very latest. Just this one month's supply. When I mentioned it to his roommate, he said, "You should get a load of his video collection."

Matthew went to Sex Addicts Anonymous on Tuesday nights, but, as I recall, he never managed more than a month of abstinence. I tried to talk Twelve-Step with him. I tried it while we were laughing about something else, so I wouldn't sound like a fatuous moron, but it came out fatuous anyway: "Look, every time you pay some little hooker on University Avenue you're enabling an addict. I mean maybe there are some prostitutes who aren't chemically dependent, but no street-level tootsie—which, let's face it, is all you can afford—is out there for any other reason. You should be taking those girls to Meetings."

I was not exactly on the mark, there, with that one. Matthew didn't see them as addicts in need of recovery; he didn't see them at all. He told me it was just a thing he couldn't stop doing. "It seems like I get something out of making myself disgusting to myself. I mean, while I'm doing it, it feels good." I knew all about that, most certainly. "But you know me," he said. "You know that in real life I respect people." I knew about that, too—the loathsome thing about yourself that you refuse to let into your real life, because it isn't you, it isn't you at all.

I decided I didn't need to know about it. He didn't need to know everything about me, either. Your friends do not need to know everything about you. For instance, when my office pals would pick me up outside the Ramsey Medical Center on certain mornings, to take me to work and save me an hour on the bus, I felt fine about just telling them I was seeing a dentist. Sometimes I was afraid that my prescription would fall out of my pocket and they'd recognize the name: that little drug is one medicine that gets a lot of press. It is the star, the celebrity, the Marilyn of medicines, so I made sure to keep its label tucked safely down in the lint-lined caverns of my old tweed coat.



"Another household that lists itself as being headed by a cat!"

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Matthew, especially, I didn't feel like telling. When he asked me why I'd stopped seeing this or that boy, I gave him sardonic Twelve-Step jargon. "I didn't want to defocus off my own issues?" I said, lilting upward at the end of my sentence, imitating the passive-aggressive vocal patterns of a Minnesota treatment person: by inflecting your sentence as though it were a question you force the other person, rather than yourself, to take some kind of a stand. They can agree or disagree; you're merely asking questions. It's a somewhat manipulative manner of dialogue?

And that should go on my list—that I wish I'd told Matthew I was not at the dentist's.

Telling Matthew might not have made a difference to what he eventually did, but it would have made a difference to me. I like to see myself as someone who is honest, and loyal to her friends, even if she sometimes lies to them. Matthew thought I was, which is why he didn't mind saying what he said that day in his van.

"What woman," he asked, "would go with me if I didn't pay her?"

We were listening to Matthew's latest tape. It was a collection of new folk-music bands. The vocalists were all women with gentle, quavering voices.

"That's ridiculous," I told him. "You're kind, you're decent, you've got a job, and you're *very* smart. Any woman would be proud to call you sweetie."

But that evening he came around to see if I could walk the walk as well as talk the talk. He'd bought a new sweater; and although it looked a bit like the sweaters his mother used to send him, it was a sweater that showed some daring. His mother's taste ran to pastels, with corporate-looking patterns worked into the textiles. This sweater was only one color, red, and it was made of some kind of yarn that did not look entirely syn-

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thetic. He handed me some flowers.

I gave his shoulder a punch and said, "Come *on*. What *is* this?" Oh, I was getting good at Minnesota hide-and-seek. I knew exactly what he was doing.

"I want to take you out," he said, and his eyes rested on me, so pale-blue that they seemed gray. I felt that I was looking pale myself. I felt my old revulsion start up, the desire to keep on playing with the puppets and not hear what was being said.

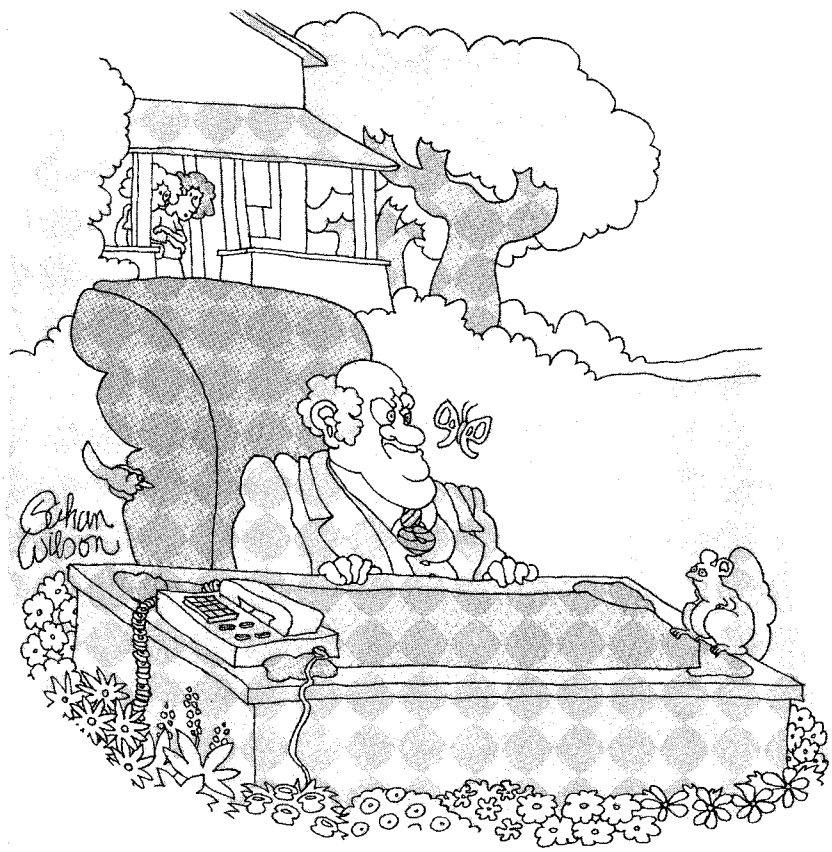
"Matthew, I'm not sure that's a good idea? We have a very valuable friendship?"

"That's why it's a good idea. We've both been sober a year, and neither of us has been in what you could call a 'relationship.' So we could just, you know, just try it. . . . Unless—" He didn't finish the unless, but I could have finished it for him: "Unless you were lying. Unless I really am disgusting to your eyes and the eyes of women."

I was having trouble—I am having trouble—thinking of myself as a "woman." Anyhow, I had plenty of reasons not to step out in a serious manner, with him or with anyone. The problem was that I didn't want to think about any of these particular reasons. I didn't want to think about the fact that I wasn't in tip-top relationship shape. I didn't want to tell him about my health status. There are some things that I Would Never tell anyone, and I didn't want to tell my friend Matthew anything at all. He was holding the flowers, and I could see them trembling gently, as if touched by a small draft.

"Matthew," I said, "it's probably not real sober behavior for me to start dating perverts."

NOT that we never spoke to each other again, or anything so efficient, so tidy, as all that. I passed it off as a joke; he passed it off as passing insanity. But we didn't meet at lunchtime anymore, and if we talked on the phone one of us always had to hang up and do something pressing. Usually he was going to some kind of Meeting. He was starting to go to more and more different kinds. He was very excited about one called No More Shame. I'd gone back to school, and I was making a lot of noise about how when you start living an actual life you don't have time to just endlessly hang out with people anymore.



"Harold's easing into retirement."

It was the next spring when I last talked to Matthew on the telephone. He told me he was leaving to go set up a new line for InfoSystem in a city in Indonesia. I reminded him that Southeast Asia was where they manufactured his drug of choice, but he didn't seem concerned. I didn't press it; I hate to sound like some A.A. Aunt Nellie. Besides, I could tell from his hushed, gravelly-sounding voice that he had already slipped out of our little recovery community. Which is just something that happens: people come; they go; they leave town. Sometimes they come back, sometimes not. If I were a lounge singer, I'd name it "A Little Process Called Life."

Matthew's parents came to Minnesota from Sault Ste. Marie a few months after he'd left. They said they needed to straighten out some business, but I think they just wanted to see the place that he had told them about, back when he was telling them things. For three months, he hadn't told them, or anyone else, anything; he had asked them to take out some of his savings and send him a Western Union money order in June—and then nothing. They sat across from me at the coffee shop with their backs straight and their hands under the table. His father was wearing a sweater that had clearly been purchased by his wife. On his father it did not look at all out of place. He was a man with huge, bony hands—knuckles and sinew, planklike wrists. He said, "Matthew told us you and he liked to listen to music together. He loves music. I always thought he had interesting taste. Very sophisticated."

"Jim and I have been praying," his mother said. "Not for any results, but just for acceptance."

"And for Matthew to get well," his father added. "For Matthew to find some peace." I didn't point out the contradiction between this and his wife's "acceptance" remark. Instead, I tried to smile, as if we all knew the same prayers, and I kept looking at Matthew's father, who had put his arm behind his wife's shoulders. If Matthew ever came back, he would fit into his father's sweaters in about twenty years. Every time the shop door opened I shivered a little; the breeze went right through the chiffon blouse I was wearing. It was see-through, so you wore a tank top under it, insouciant and very fashionable. I'd seen it on all sorts of

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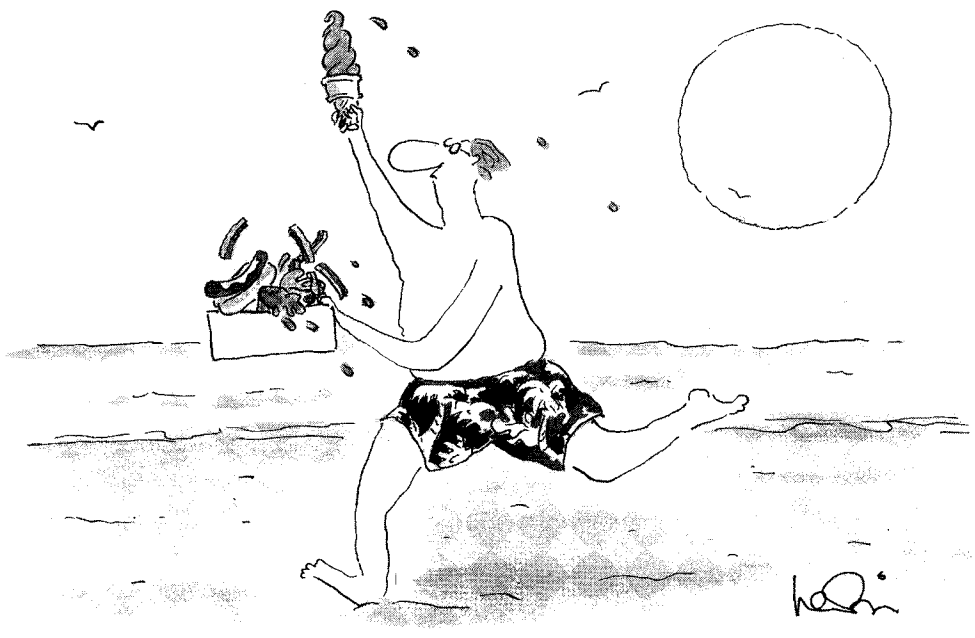
beautiful young girls, in restaurants and coffee shops all over town.

I SEEM to have trouble sticking to the list idea; my counsellor would probably tell me to get some distance from it, go take a walk in the sun. Well, the sun is good for you only in small doses, but I'm making my peace with it. I no longer plot my walk to work exclusively along streets I know will be in the shade. I even sit on my porch in the daytime; it's a good porch, because it gets just a little sun, about twenty minutes in the late afternoon. Which is when the kids from next door come over to swing on my hammock and ask me questions. There are six of them, I think, but they seem like more because I can't keep their names straight. Their names are Cambodian, and I can't pronounce them. They're from the same region as Matthew's drug of choice, and mine, and yet they have come here; that should tell me something. I wish I were better at saying their names, but it's pretty clear at this point that I don't have much of an ear for language, and I can put that on the list: I Will Never learn to speak another language. It's not important, in this case, since these kids speak English, which is sometimes a good thing and sometimes a bad one, depending on what they have to tell me. For instance, when the oldest girl told me that she used to have a baby brother but a soldier swung him into a tree and cracked his head, I would have been perfectly happy if she hadn't known how to tell me this. All I could find to say was "Are you sure?" She might have been making it up to get me to give her more crackers and jelly—they only get one serving; I'm not a bakery.

"Sure," she says. "That day, it was rain." But she's only thirteen years old, so maybe she won't have to keep seeing that picture at night, when her eyes are shut and she's trying to focus on positive, relaxing images, the way she'll surely learn to do—this being America, after all.

Her ten-year-old sister is too young to remember anything like that, but she enjoys punching people in the arm. A painful and annoying habit, but at least it distracts her from snooping around inside my apartment. Last week, she and the two boys came running out of my kitchen brandishing a half-empty container of AZT.

OPENING OF THE SUMMER GAMES



"Why you take medicine?" they shouted. "Are you sick?"

"Stay out of the kitchen!" I shouted back, making a grab for my tablets. "No. They're like vitamins. I take them so I won't get sick."

The girl, obviously the ringleader of the kitchen-snooping expedition, punched me in the arm. "You won't get sick," she said. "You're strong. You just have to let me punch you in the arm every day, and you won't get sick." I wish that were true. I'd still rather get punched in the arm every day than take drugs that don't get me high. It's unnatural as a concept, and frightening in its implication. And what if I have to put that, finally, on my list: "I Will Never get high again."

Matthew probably had something like that on his list—something with the word "never" in it. It's no good to think like that, in such grandiose and sweeping language. I could have told him. It may be jargon, but it's true. It's better not to think in these agonized, religious extremes. Better to just break it down into smaller, more manageable units of time. The nice thing about small units of time is how they add up. I've added them up, so far, into two years, three months, four days, and right up into this minute, right now, on my porch, where I am watching these children play the parachute game, which is their favorite game because it involves an unlimited amount of shrieking, yelling, kicking, and bossing each other around.

It's a simple game. One by one, the kids crawl under the parachute, and I twist them up inside it. I roll them around and drape the fabric over them in labyrinthine folds until all that can be seen is a big pile of red silk, full of squealing lumps, and then I say, "Go!" The game is to get out while accidentally clocking as many of your brothers and sisters on the jaw as you possibly can. The silk never rips: it's designed to take on the wind in the sky; there's no chance a little kid is going to put a sneaker through it. When one emerges, he or she stands there yelling instructions to the ones still inside. "The other way, kick with you legs." As they begin to tumble out, they start to count: "That's two of us. . . . That's four. . . ." But the sixth and last, a tiny girl of three, can't find her way out. The rest of us can't see her; she's so small she doesn't even make a decent-sized lump, but we can hear a thin, terrified wail coming from deep inside the red silk folds. The oldest girl, with a slight, hissing breath, goes to the parachute and unfolds it with quick, flinging motions, as if she were making a bed. In three seconds, the sixth and littlest is out, standing upright, silent, an embarrassed smile on her face, sparkling quietly like a candied plum.

—EMILY CARTER

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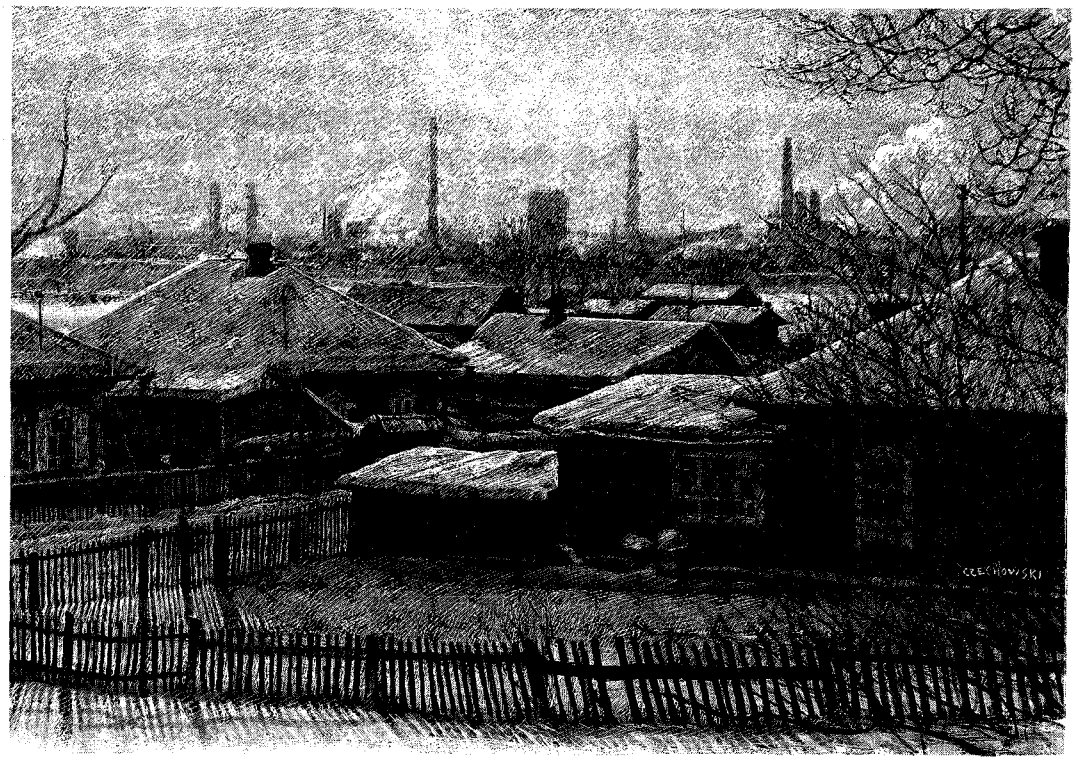
A REPORTER AT LARGE

SIBERIA



ON January 31st of this year, when Boris Yeltsin granted an amnesty to the last remaining prisoners of conscience in Russian jails, he brought to a close a painful epoch in Siberian history. Russians first crossed the Urals into Siberia at roughly the same time, and for roughly the same reasons, that Western European conquistadores and colonists went to the Americas. In 1582, a band of fewer than a thousand Cossacks, under the leadership of a river pirate named Yermak Timofei, attacked the Khan of Siberia, Kuchum, whose people were related to the Tatars of Central Asia. In a battle near the present city of Tobolsk, the Russians, who had superior firearms, routed the Siberian Tatars. It was one of the more efficient military operations in history. With a single victory, Yermak added to the dominions of the Czar, Ivan the Terrible, a territory thirty-eight per cent larger than the United States. Beyond Kuchum's fortress, the Russians soon learned, lay only a few, readily subdued nomadic tribes and thousands of miles of empty land, stretching to the Pacific.

Because of its harsh climate and its enormous distance from European Russia, Siberia was almost immediately used by the czars as a prison without walls, a place of exile for political dissidents. Imperial Russia sent tens of thousands of prisoners, some of them dissidents and some common criminals, to Siberia in every year of the nineteenth century. Under Stalin, who had spent four years in exile in Siberia himself, millions more disappeared into the archipelago of prison camps. Nikita Khrushchev began to empty the camps in 1956, but the practice of political exile persisted into the early years of *perestroika*. Now, finally, it has ended, and the concept of Siberia impressed onto the world's mind by chroniclers like Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn needs revision.

Nowadays, most Siberians live in cities and towns built during the Soviet years near deposits of coal, oil, gold, and other natural wealth that could be taken out of the ground and sent westward to speed the pace of industrialization in European Russia. Kemerovo is one of those cities; the capital of the Kemerovo oblast, it lies next to the Tom River, some eighteen hundred miles east of Moscow, or roughly halfway between the eastern and western borders of Russia. In 1721, an explorer named Mikhail Volkov, floating northward down the Tom, noticed seams of coal in a palisade on the river's right bank. Nearly two centuries later, Russian capitalists finally extended a railroad into Siberia and began mining the coal. The First World War and the Russian Revolution terminated their enterprise, but by that time Russian surveyors had estimated that Kemerovo and the region surrounding it, known as the Kuznetsk Basin, or the Kuzbass, contained one-fourth of the world's known coal reserves.

Once the Communists had secured power, they decided to make Kemerovo and its coal deposits a central element of their plans to transform Russia into an industrial power on a par with Germany, England, or the United States and, at the same time, to demonstrate the unity of the world's proletariat. Among the many Western leftists who washed up in Moscow around then was William (Big Bill) Haywood, a miner from Utah and the leader of the Industrial Workers of the World. The I.W.W., whose members were known as Wobblies, campaigned for industrial democracy and an end to wage slavery. In 1917, shortly after the United

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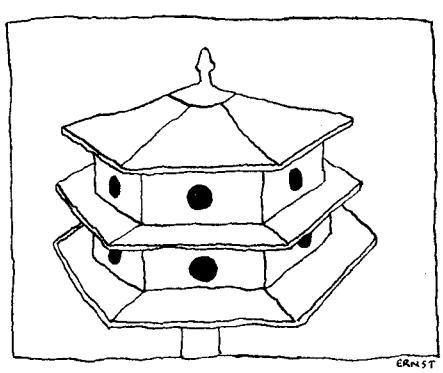
States entered the First World War, Haywood and scores of other Wobblies were arrested in Chicago on dubious charges of violating laws against "criminal syndicalism," and, in the climate of wartime xenophobia, were convicted. Haywood, out on bail pending his appeal, fled to Moscow and joined the Communist Party. There he and some comrades, with the blessings of Lenin, came up with a scheme to recruit workers from around the world to migrate to Kemerovo as proletarian colonists and help the Russians create a model workers' enterprise.

The Wobblies never attracted more than about four hundred foreigners to Kemerovo, or only a tenth of what they had hoped to get. The volunteers needed seven weeks to make their way by train from Moscow to Siberia, through a land suffering from disease and starvation. About eighty per cent of them came down with dysentery. Once they were in place, their work went slowly; being industrial democrats, they tended to take votes instead of directions. The advance party failed to finish the first big workers' barracks on time, and arriving colonists had to live for a while in tents and boxcars. The workers clashed with the Russian managers of the existing mines, who did not appreciate the advice of foreigners, whether they had the blessings of Lenin or not. In 1926, the Russians formally dissolved the colony. The foreign workers left, except for a few who married Russian women and stayed there until they died. For years, the only reminder of the Americans' sojourn was a factory whistle they had installed that used to wake up the city at six o'clock each morning.

Haywood's recruits did, however, succeed in one respect: in coming to Siberia, they brought a smoky, gritty early-twentieth-century ethos of industrialization and growth, which would soon be discarded in the West, but which, because it meshed with the ideas of Lenin and Stalin, held sway in Russia for generations. One of the Wobblies, a former Ford worker named Herbert Calvert, admiringly called Kemerovo "a little Gary, Indiana." From that time until the *perestroika* era, Kemerovo strove diligently to become a bigger Gary. A Soviet book on the region which was published in 1986 boasted that Kemerovo had surpassed Gary's metallurgical industry at a pace unmatched in world history. Among the city's early heroes, the book gave pride of place to a coal miner named A. S. Philippov, who, it said, exceeded his digging norm by one thousand one hundred and twenty-six per cent, and earned himself the title "The Human Excavator." Philippov's shovel, the book noted, was enshrined in the Museum of the Revolution in Moscow. In February, as I stood on the high right bank of the Tom, near the site of the Wobblies' colony, I could see the results of their vision: I counted twenty-five smokestacks on the opposite bank, all spewing something into a low, grimy sky.

Since Kemerovo, which now has a population of five hundred and twenty-one thousand, dates almost entirely from the Soviet period, its skyline has few of the softening features of older Russian cities. No bulbous church domes glint in the sunlight. There are no pastel merchants' mansions from prerevolutionary times. The central plaza has a massive beige Greek Revival state theatre, with a triangular pediment and heavy columns. Pilasters and arches festoon brown and ochre five-story buildings flanking it, but the masonry of their façades has started to crack and fall off. Outside the city center, the landscape consists mostly of row after row of drab gray and brown apartment blocks, interspersed with factories and smokestacks. On the riverbank is a memorial to the local soldiers who died in the Second World War, and students from the city's secondary schools still stand guard duty by its eternal flame. A block or so away from the memorial, on a fence in an alley, a graffitist has painted a replica of a thousand-dollar bill.

THE original coal mine in the city played out about twenty years ago, and the blind horses that used to plod along underground, powering its



wagons, came to the surface and retired. In order to see a working mine, I got a ride with a miner named Slava Golikov to a town called Beryozovsky, some twenty miles to the north, at the edge of the Kuzbass. The town's name is derived from the word for birch tree, and as we drove along a bumpy two-lane road we saw clusters of birch, graceful and white, set in gently rolling fields of snow which stretched to the horizon. Piles of black, sooty snow lined the road, and every few miles we would come across a mine, or a coal-washing plant, with a smokestack pouring gray-brown fumes into the sky. Near the edge of Beryozovsky, we passed a fenced enclosure, inside which I could see at a distance a radio-transmission tower rising above the trees. "There used to be nuclear missiles there, but they've been withdrawn," Golikov said, and he added, mischievously, "They were probably pointed at you."

Beryozovsky, which has a population of fifty-eight thousand, is less a city than a box drawn on the map to enclose several scattered villages, each of which exists to serve a particular mine. The city has one stoplight, one statue of Lenin, four cinemas, three communal baths, and one restaurant, Golikov said. No one he knows eats at the restaurant, he added, because the food is terrible and the prices are high. There are no bars or taverns. Miners generally buy their vodka in bottles and drink it at home or, in summer, on the street.

A little more than half the population, he told me, now lives in standard five-story Soviet apartment buildings. The rest live in wooden barracks or cottages that were built around the mines when they opened and were meant to be temporary; despite the planners' promises, the Soviet housing industry never managed to build enough apartments to satisfy the demand. Golikov grew up in one of the cottages, on Krupskaya Street, and his mother still lives there. To see it, we turned off the main road onto a snowy side street, past one of the city's bathhouses. We turned left down a narrower lane and squeezed past a big yellow city bus parked outside one of the cottages. Our car could not negotiate the next turn, onto Krupskaya, because the road was full of unplowed snow, so we walked down a slippery path made by the

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EVEN

Sundown, & under the afterglow
woods & fields fall still.
Hidden, the day creatures drowse.
Night creatures wait on greater dark.
Dusk lovers step soft; rabbits go cautious
& the hunt is up for the unwary in between.

Under the trees fireflies exclaim.
After dinner city people on vacation
hold hands, having been promised the moon,
which is rising up a dark-collecting sky.
It is June, trees hold still, the breeze
holds its breath. I stroll out into the dim field
open to great horned owls, too big to fear them.

My mother & father are walking out
hand in hand in my mind of summer
into the shadowed meadow
crowded with flickering lights
in the Poconos in 1919
under their honeymoon.

He calls them lightning bugs, she laughs & says
Fireflies, though the hotel receptionist
said there were glowworms, how funny.

They do not plan to remember it all of their lives
but they do. Haunted by silence, they do.
It wasn't easily talked of. All I know is
neither ever saw again
such shining flying in every direction,
acres of low-lying air where wild sparks
pulsed silent in the dark. Until they died,
it would flare up in them at times.

He turned the talk to lightning,
listening to her fear & attraction; always
he answered around her to keep her, if he could,
from hurting with her wit where he was tender,
or with slow tears if his wit spoke.
It got better after twenty years or so.
They found themselves
each in the other's power & lost dread.
He would or she would take turns
managing to dredge up hope
in rummaging just for luck
for Heaven in the marriage
that was their Lost & Found.

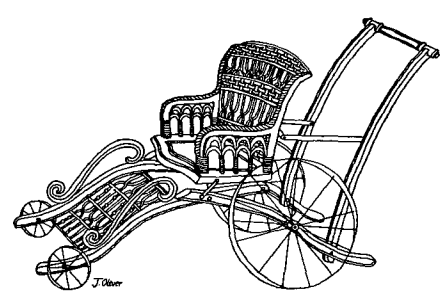
—Marie Ponsot

• •

street's trudging residents. The cottage, which was painted blue and yellow and had a tin roof, stood on about a quarter of an acre of land. To one side was a gray, weatherbeaten wooden shed, used for storing coal, and behind the cottage were three more sheds. One was a dark, low-ceilinged family *banya*, with a little coal stove and a wooden bench, for the Golikovs' weekly baths. The second was an outhouse, and the third, Golikov told me, had housed a cow when he and his brothers were growing up, and was empty now. The cottage itself had three rooms, all kept warm by a tiled stove in the kitchen, where coal burned all day. The floor listed, and the doorway between the kitchen and the living room had sagged into a trapezoidal shape. His family, Golikov recalled, had made one major improvement in the house: they had installed a pipe that brought cold water into the kitchen and obviated the necessity of going out to a communal pump on Krupskaya Street. Other than that, the cottage remained pretty much as the mine had built it in the fifties.

Slava Golikov worked in the First of May Mine, ten miles north of the center of Beryozovsky. Some of the older mines in the Kemerovo region have elaborate headquarters buildings. One of them, at the Northern Mine, built during Stalin's time, was adorned with huge granite classical columns and stained-glass windows, presumably to suggest to the miners that they were entering a temple of labor. But by 1975, when the First of May Mine opened, that kind of pretense had vanished. Its headquarters building is blocky and functional, surrounded by a coal conveyor and a heating plant, with the inevitable belching smokestack. It suggests to the miners only that they are going to work.

When miners go to work in the First of May Mine, they enter this building and strip naked in a large locker room down the hall from the main entrance. They draw their work clothes from a cheerful woman attendant of great age and girth. First, they put on white cotton long underwear and wrap their feet in white cloth. Then they put on gray padded pants and quilted jackets, and stuff their wrapped feet into black rubber boots.



Dressed, they walk to a wire enclosure and check out hard hats, mittens, belts, headlamps, and battery packs from a younger woman. In an American mine, they would, by federal law, receive a safety package containing goggles and an oxygen supply, which they would carry on their belts, in case of a fire underground. In Siberia, they get a parting smile from the locker-room babushka.

The miners descend a cracked concrete staircase and leave the building through a back door into an icy little yard formed by the conveyor and the heating plant. The yard has a bench to sit on, but it is broken, and on the day I was there a pile of dirt and drifted snow all but hid it. After a while, a transit bus, an incongruous red against the mine's backdrop of grays, swings by to pick up the miners. They stiffly climb its steps and sit beneath a pinup photo of a recumbent naked woman. The bus drones out of the yard, through the mine gate, and into the surrounding forest, along a narrow road plowed through the snow. For a few minutes, the ride is almost pastoral, and the miners can look at clean white snow frosting the boughs of evergreen trees. The bus stops in a clearing containing a brown shed, a snow-covered mound with a black tarpaulin pulled across one side of it,

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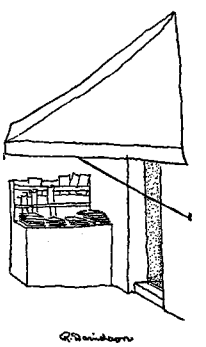
an outhouse, and some machinery, including a heavy cable-and-reel. Inside the shed, on the day I visited, a young woman with curly, golden hair sat at a control panel with a nervous little dog, reading "The Gulag Archipelago." Her dog jumped up and barked furiously as we entered. "She doesn't like anybody," the woman said, apologizing for the dog. She put down her book, threw a switch, and set the machinery rumbling. It drew a cable car, which the Russians call a *brandsberg*, up toward the surface.

The miners walk from the shed on a narrow, slippery path through the snow toward the black tarpaulin, pull it aside, and enter the mine. The first tunnel is about six feet high, with steel beams overhead and log pillars along the walls; the smell of resin rises from the wood. The miners walk fifty yards down slimy black wooden steps to the *brandsberg*. They squeeze in under its steel roof. The *brandsberg* takes them six hundred yards or so below the surface, to the vicinity of the working coal seams. Then they walk. In the deeper tunnels, the ceilings get lower, until the miners are hunched over, ankle deep in black water, with only their headlamps for light. As they near their workplace, they must squeeze around or crawl over conveyors and other machinery, some of which is debris, broken down and useless. The beams of light from their headlamps capture clouds of coal dust. By the time I arrived at the work site, I had been walking, downhill, for half an hour. I was sweating, and my legs were sore. The miners were just beginning their shift.



They work with a caterpillar-like machine that they call a *kombain;* it "combines" a digging tool, which grinds chunks of coal from the wall of the shaft, with a conveyor that hauls it to the surface. Some of them wield shovels to pick up the coal that falls from the combine. Others tend the machinery. Their movements are perpetually constricted by the low ceilings of the shaft and the tight spaces between the *kombain* and the mine walls. They might work an entire eight-hour shift without ever standing erect.

In the past two years, a few delegations of Kuzbass miners have visited the United States, and they now know some of the differences between their working conditions and those elsewhere. In an advanced American mine, the tunnels would generally be a couple of feet higher and wider. Someone would be spreading pulverized limestone to make the coal dust inert and minimize the danger of a dust explosion. The machine that digs coal from the seam would probably have a sharper edge and a laser guidance mechanism to minimize the dust and debris it created; it would also spray a fine stream of water on the coal as it removed it, to help keep the dust from escaping into the air. The Russian machinery has none of these features, and it leaves much more coal to be picked up manually. In a Western mine, fewer men would work with the machinery, and their productivity would be much higher. In the First of May Mine, which is the newest in the Kuzbass, the average miner produces fifty-three tons of coal a month. In an American mine called Mettiki, in western Maryland, which I recently visited, the management expects to get almost that much coal from each miner in about a day and a half.

Probably a hundred differences, small and large, account for the productivity gap. The Siberian miners' belts, for instance, fit badly; I struggled constantly to keep my battery pack from sagging. The American miners' belts are designed with suspenders, and once the miners have put them on they can forget about them. In the Mettiki mine, on the day I visited, a shoe on the bottom of the main drilling tool had broken. The mine superintendent called the factory and expected a replacement part within hours. In Siberia, replacement parts come slowly, if at all. The Kuzbass miners blame archaic technology for their low productivity. One miner told me, "The miners who went to the United States came back and said they kept looking for shovels in the mines they saw. They never found one."

NOT many men emerge from a career in the Kuzbass coal mines to enjoy a long retirement. Slava Golikov's father did not. Golikov himself is thirty-nine years old; he is tall and slightly paunchy, has a mop of oily gray-black hair, wears eyeglasses, and has a couple of fresh pink scars over his right eye from an injury he received in a brawl on New Year's Eve. When we had a chance to sit down and talk, he was wearing black pinstriped trousers from one old suit and a gray striped jacket from another. "I was born in Komsomolsk-on-Amur, in the Far East," he told me. "In 1959, when I was six, my father moved us here. He was born near Novosibirsk"—a city about a hundred and twenty miles west of Kemerovo—"and he wanted to live closer to home. Also, he heard they were opening new mines, and he wanted to try himself in a new capacity." Golikov's father died after about a dozen years in the mines. "He was, I don't know, forty-three—no, forty-seven years old. He hadn't retired. The doctors said something was wrong with his lungs."

Black lung? Cancer?

"No, they said just a general loss of strength from work in the mines. And he smoked."

At the time of his father's death, Golikov was nineteen, and was trying to avoid working in the mines himself. "After secondary school, I got into a polytechnic institute in Kemerovo to study chemistry, but I didn't like it, so I dropped out. Then I went to Nizhny Novgorod"—the city in European Russia that was known during the Soviet period as Gorky—"and worked for a while in an automobile plant. When my father died, I came back here. I tried to set myself up working in a heating plant, but then I went into the Army, and after I got out I got married, and a daughter appeared. You couldn't make enough money in the heating plant to live halfway decently. It paid maybe two hundred rubles a month, while the mine paid maybe three hundred, or more if you worked in a good section. So there was no choice."

Golikov became an underground electrician, repairing the equipment inside the coal shafts. At first, he and his wife and daughter lived in his mother's cottage, on Krupskaya Street. Later, the mine provided him an apartment in a newer building in Beryozovsky. "That was better, I think, because when you work in the mine and you come home to a cottage there's still a whole pile of chores to do, starting with the stove. You don't have much time left to rest. And to work in a mine and not rest . . ." He let the thought dangle, unfinished.

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Despite the hardships of his life, Golikov said, his belief in Communism rarely wavered during his first decade in the mine. He was cynical enough to see through the glorification of the doddering Leonid Brezhnev, but his cynicism went no further. "As far as the whole system was concerned, I was just like the overwhelming majority. I was convinced we lived in the best and brightest society in the world. Of course, once in a while I would wonder why the workers in other countries, knowing how well we lived, didn't set up the same system for themselves. But I believed that we lived in a fortunate country, in a fortunate system, and that I had to work conscientiously for it, so that it would continue to move forward and get even better."

I asked Golikov whether the Soviet dissident movement or the broadcasts of Western radio stations had affected his thinking at all during those years. "Well," he replied, speaking first about the dissidents, "I knew about a few bad people who wanted to slander our brilliant system. I read about the trial of Joseph Brodsky, and I thought he just didn't want to work." Western radio stations were generally jammed, he recalled, but sometimes a political thaw caused the jamming to cease for a while. "When I did listen," he said, "I would think, What lies!"

He told me he now felt ashamed of what he had thought about Brodsky, and he tried to explain what the political climate had been like in Siberia then. "You have to distinguish between here and Moscow, or Petersburg, or even Novosibirsk, where there was some intellectual movement, however small and weak—where there were people trying to tell people the truth. Here, in the depths of the provinces, that was barely audible. You know, when a man has no opportunity to compare, to see something different, it's just like in the camps or jails. You adapt, and try to make your own situation a bit better."

After Brezhnev's death, in 1982, though, Golikov's suspicions grew. "I still didn't understand what was going on in the country, but I remember thinking that if we had the best society in the world, if we had the most advanced technology and we lived better than all the others, and the whole world would someday live as we did, then why were they jamming other radio stations? Why weren't there other points of view in the press? Why were they afraid of us? What were they trying to hide?"

"Frankly, what's killing me about this marriage is realizing how entirely preventable it was."

• •

When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power and introduced his policy of *glasnost*, he did not undermine Golikov's faith in the old system so much as he confirmed and strengthened the doubts that the old system had created. "When Gorbachev started to talk about the need for changes, and they started to print writers who had been forbidden for a long time, I subscribed to a mass of newspapers, and I read everything I could find. It was all sown in fruitful soil, because it explained a lot of things I had been thinking. Then I started to think for myself a lot."

Outwardly, Golikov said, he remained "an ordinary citizen, working conscientiously in the mine," who gave the authorities no cause to be concerned. But underground the miners began to talk among themselves about what they were reading. "At first, it was about how things we had learned as history turned out not to be true. For instance, I will tell you completely sincerely that I hadn't known until that time about the millions and millions of victims of my country." The underground talk continued that way until the summer of 1989. At that time, Golikov was at home, recovering from a broken leg he had suffered in the mine. "The roof caved in and I didn't jump out of the way in time," he told me. "That sort of thing happens very often, because the working conditions force the workers to violate the safety rules."

I asked him to explain. The system, he said, gave miners monthly quotas, expressed in metres. If a team of tunnelers, such as Golikov's, pushed a mine shaft a hundred metres farther in a given month, they received bonuses that doubled, or even tripled, their pay. If they failed to "fulfill the plan," they got only their base salaries. "Suppose you have only one day left in the month, and you've penetrated ninety-seven metres," he went on. "You have three metres to go, but the material for reinforcing the shaft hasn't arrived. Even though there's a danger of a cave-in, you go forward, violating the safety rules. There's no time to think about safety. You think first of all that you have to do to fulfill the plan to get your money."

In his years in the mine, Golikov

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said, he could recall perhaps ten fatal accidents, and a lot of near misses. Throughout the Kuzbass, the fatality rate averages 1.2 for every million tons of coal produced, he told me. "You can figure it out," he said. "We now mine somewhere around one hundred million tons of coal a year in the Kuzbass. That is, about one hundred and twenty miners die each year." (In the United States, underground coal mines in 1991 produced more than four hundred million tons of coal, with forty fatalities—less than a tenth of the Kuzbass fatality rate.)

As Golikov, home from the hospital and out of his cast, brooded about returning to work in the summer of 1989, the Soviet consumer-supply system all but collapsed. "There was nothing in the stores," he recalled. "No sausage, no meat at all. There was no sugar. There was not even soap, and a miner has to clean himself up. There was not even soap in the mine showers. That was the last drop that caused the bucket to overflow."

On July 11, 1989, coal miners in Mezhdurechensk, a town at the southern end of the Kuzbass, went on strike. In a previous Mezhdurechensk strike, in 1959, Soviet authorities coped by keeping the strike secret and quietly appeasing the miners. Thirty years later, *glasnost* made those tactics impossible. Slava Golikov heard rumors about the strike in Mezhdurechensk hours after it began, and that same evening radio and television news broadcasts confirmed the rumors. He and two of his brothers, who also worked in the First of May Mine, decided to find out at first hand what was happening and to show their support. They piled into a car, drove all night, and got to Mezhdurechensk by morning.

"We were the first miners to arrive in Mezhdurechensk from another city," he recalled. "They were having a rally in the center of the town, talking about how they had to get better supplies." When the Mezhdurechensk miners learned that comrades from Beryozovsky had arrived, they invited Golikov to speak. He did, and unburdened himself of the ideas that had been forming in his mind for the past few years. He urged them to think beyond the immediate problem of empty store shelves. "First, I said, you need to make every mine autonomous, so that it completely benefits from the fruits of its labor." He added proudly, "And I found support."

If Moscow had sent an official to the Kuzbass early enough, Golikov believed, the government could have settled the strike in Mezhdurechensk just by pledging an injection of groceries and soap. But before Moscow could react, the strike demands, thanks in part to Golikov, had changed into a fundamental attack on state control.

As Golikov and his brothers drove back to Beryozovsky the next day, he saw that all over the Kuzbass, where there are sixty-eight mines and more than four hundred thousand miners, men had left their pits to support the strike. "When we got back to Beryozovsky, we were very tired, and I went to sleep," he told me. "But my comrades called me up and asked if I had really been in Mezhdurechensk. When I said I had, they said, 'Get up! We're having a rally in the square.' When I got there, the Party workers were bewildered, but they were trying to get control of the situation. The first secretary of the city Party Committee was already on the platform, speaking, and he was ticking off the demands from the miners—soap, meat, sugar, and that was all. But I answered him from below, saying, 'That's not true.' People in the crowd told me to go up on the platform and speak. I did, and I said, 'We need to have the mines autonomous. Why should a whole pile of bureaucrats be sitting over us and determining what we would be paid? And why, if I'm responsible for my production, shouldn't its fruits remain here? I probably know better than the bureaucrats what problems I need to solve.' "

I asked Golikov if he had been afraid to stand up and speak out. "Yes, of course," he replied. "If someone tells me that he wasn't afraid, I don't believe him. But the fear somehow quickly passed when you saw thousands of comrades around you." The head of the local K.G.B. section monitored the strike very closely, he recalled. But the K.G.B. did not interfere.

The 1989 strike in the coal mines had a greater effect on politics than on the miners' standard of living. In order to negotiate with the government, the miners created a new workers' organization—separate from the official trade union, which was dominated by Party functionaries. Slava Golikov became its chairman. As time went on, he and his comrades began to understand that the existing system was incapable of granting their demands for autonomy, food, and housing, so they began to focus on changing the system. In June, 1990, they struck for one day, demanding the recall of the deputies in the Soviet parliament who had been elected by the Communist Party and Party-dominated organizations rather than by rank-and-file voters. (This category included Mikhail Gorbachev.) In March, 1991, they struck for more than two months, demanding the dispersal of the parliament and the holding of new elections. That strike ended after Boris Yeltsin came to the Kuzbass, and promised to work together with the miners to reform the country.

The upheaval brought about by the failed coup of August, 1991, had its reflection in Kemerovo. In its aftermath, the Russian parliament voted to give Yeltsin the power to appoint the leaders of oblast governments. In the Kemerovo oblast, Yeltsin appointed a mining engineer named Mikhail Kislyuk. Like Yeltsin himself, Kislyuk had been a Party official, serving as secretary of the Party organization in a mine. He had quit the Party in April of 1990. From the outset, Kislyuk had coöperated with the miners' movement, advising them in their negotiations with the government. When he took over the Kemerovo government, he gave Golikov and the miners an office in the oblast administration building, and he worked closely with them on plans to privatize the mines and to attract foreign investors to modernize them.

The miners, Golikov told me, realized that this process would not be easy and, in contrast to the way they had felt in 1989, had no illusions about the government's ability simply to grant them a better standard of living. He said he accepted the fact that in the course of reform some mines would probably close, and miners would be laid off. "No one in the world knows how to push such a big country onto new rails, from totalitarian socialism

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to a market system. There will be mistakes. There already have been. They just have to be corrected."

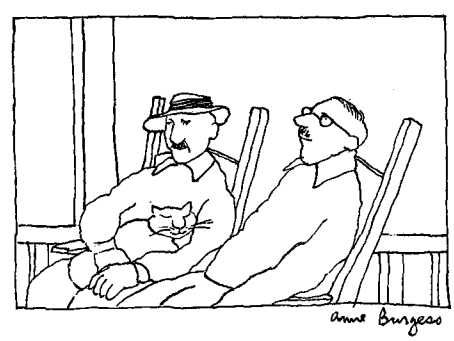
Did the miners possess the patience to wait while the Yeltsin administration corrected its mistakes? "Yes," he said. "Now they do. I can say that with absolute certainty."

YELTSIN, it turned out, had bought that patience, with money he did not in fact have. I called on Vladimir Dubrovsky, the director of the First of May Mine. Dubrovsky, a short, black-haired engineer in his early forties, with a trim mustache that made him look a little like Thomas E. Dewey, worked at a curiously small, plain desk in a large office in the mine's administration building. Charts and graphs showing the mine's production figures dominated the wall opposite him. He had worked in the mine from its beginnings, he told me. By the time of the 1989 strike, he had risen to deputy director. The workers' collective at the mine fired the old director that year and brought in a friendly engineer from another mine to replace him. But the new director turned out to be a drinker, and in 1991 the workers fired him and elected Dubrovsky.

The Russian government had tripled the miners' pay at the same time that it raised food prices in January of 1991. A Kuzbass miner, if he fulfilled his plan, could expect to make about fifteen thousand rubles a month. (On Moscow's currency markets this winter, the ruble dipped and soared like a Chinese kite, from about seventy to the dollar to more than two hundred. A rough gauge of the ruble's value is a hundred to the dollar.) That was from three to thirty times as high as the salaries of scientists, physicians, and factory workers I met in Kemerovo. But in the present Russian economy no economic policy or statistic can be taken at face value; there are always exceptions or countervailing policies. In the case of the miners, their higher salaries did not immediately result in spending money, because of the currency shortage caused by Russia's inflation. On February 14, 1991, the first payday reflecting the new salaries, First of May miners got five hundred rubles and an I.O.U. for the rest. The currency shortage continued into the summer, and the miners continued to receive less than their promised pay. For the time being, true to Golikov's prediction, they refrained from striking. But there were growing rumbles that they might.

The new pay scale, Dubrovsky pointed out, depended heavily on a temporary subsidy from the Russian government. If the government ever follows through on its plan to free the price of coal and other fuels, it will end the salary subsidy, and the mine will have to renegotiate workers' salaries.

Production in the mine had fallen nearly as fast as salaries had gone up. One of the charts on Dubrovsky's wall showed that the mine had yielded about a million four hundred thousand tons of coal in 1990. In 1991, production fell to seven hundred thousand tons. In part, Dubrovsky blamed the spring miners' strike for the 1991 figure, so he had set a goal for 1992 of nine hundred thousand tons. Moscow, he complained, had given the mine little incentive to produce more. In the pre-*perestroika* days, the system had been simple. The mine produced coal for the state, trying to fulfill its plan. The state provided for the miners. In the latter years of *perestroika*, a "state order" had replaced the old state plan. This meant that the state took seventy per cent of the coal the mine produced, paying the arbitrary price of three hundred rubles per ton. (The world-market price of coal varies from twenty to about thirty-five dollars per ton, depending on quality.) Theoretically, the mine was free to export the remaining coal. But, Dubrovsky said, the reality was different. The mine had to turn ten per cent of the coal over to the Kemerovo oblast government. As for the rest, it was subject to crippling taxes if it was exported: the state took forty per cent of any hard-currency earnings off the top, and an extra ten per cent was levied for Moscow's Vneshekonombank, which is responsible for paying interest on the old Soviet debt and has almost no money. On top of those taxes, the railroads and ports were demanding payment in hard currency. And, finally, the Russian customs service had imposed an export tax. Dubrovsky calculated that for every ton of coal he might export, the mine would owe more hard currency than it would earn.



He looked dubiously on the promised price reform for coal and other fuels, since he did not know what the market price would be. He calculated that the mine would have to get more than twelve hundred rubles a ton for coal to remain profitable at the present wage scale. That, of course, would mean a fourfold increase in the price of coal—an increase that would inevitably be reflected in consumers' bills for heat and electricity. (Yeltsin's government, after promising to deregulate energy prices in April, put the matter off. The International Monetary Fund, administrator for the bulk of the Western aid Russia is seeking, strongly advocates deregulation. But Yeltsin and his advisers fear that the shock of sudden fuel-price increases might be more than the economy, and the populace, could bear.)

Dubrovsky, like all the other Kuzbass enterprise directors I met, saw foreign investment as the deus ex machina that would resolve this predicament. He envisioned an investor who would buy Western equipment for the mine in return for a share in the export revenues. The mine, meanwhile, would barter its share of the export profits for television sets, clothes, and cars. Thus far, though, the First of May Mine had not found such an angel.

By late winter, various enterprises throughout the Kuzbass had signed eighteen joint-venture agreements with representatives of the capitalist world. Most of the foreign businessmen, it appears, are small or medium-sized operators hoping to cut a deal that will yield a quick and bountiful return; some of their calculations have an almost gold-rush flavor. But most of the joint ventures were on hold while the investors waited to see whether the Russian government would repeal or reduce the new taxes Dubrovsky complained about, or, more probably, whether they could finagle an exemption.

To attract foreign investment, of course, Dubrovsky would have to develop a clear idea of who owned the mine and how much it was worth. As we spoke, title seemed to belong to the Russian government, but the govern-

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ment was talking of privatization. "The law is not clear," he said. "The mine has a basic worth of ninety-five million rubles, according to what has been invested in it over the years. How can it be privatized? I can't buy it. The workers don't have that kind of money." The state could, he supposed, issue stock in the mine, and give it free to the miners. "The workers would figure, 'Great. Now we're stockholders. Tomorrow we'll get higher pay.' They don't understand. What happens when they find out they get no dividends, or maybe just ten or fifteen rubles a share? Then they'll say, 'What good is this stock? What do we get for it?' "

Meanwhile, Dubrovsky had more pressing problems. He took a call from a collective-farm director in the neighboring Altai region. The farm director had no cash to pay his workers. Dubrovsky didn't have enough for his payroll, either, but he had at least some rubles at his disposal, plus a couple of thousand hungry miners. The previous day, the collective-farm director had been asking eighty rubles per kilo for beef and lamb. With this call, he came down to sixty rubles, and Dubrovsky agreed to that price. Sometimes, he told me, he trades coal or metal cable for meat. A few days later, when I visited the mine again, an electronic sign inside the main entrance told the miners that beef and lamb would be on sale in the mine store for sixty-one rubles a kilo.

Dubrovsky said, with a grimace, "Life has forced me to become a petty trader."

THOUGH neither Dubrovsky nor any of the miners I met underground were inclined to acknowledge it, the availability of food had in fact improved remarkably since the January price increases. Dubrovsky's preoccupation with finding meat for his workers seemed to be a hangover from the old system. When I visited grocery stores on my first visit to Siberia, back in 1983, I had seen shoppers picking over a few miserable, fatty shanks of beef. In the years since, the situation had slowly deteriorated, and by last fall the sight of any kind of meat in a Russian store attracted long lines of grimly determined women, prepared to wait hours to get something to feed their families. (With some exceptions, Russian men expect their wives or mothers to find their food; they themselves stand in line only for alcohol.) These were the times that forced enterprises like the First of May Mine to become food wholesalers. But by the middle of February items I had never seen before in a Russian store began to appear in Kemerovo. Bekon, a store near the state theatre, stocked no fewer than six different kinds of sausage, in addition to beef, pork, soup bones, carrots, potatoes, and onions. In a separate section, which had been leased to a private entrepreneur, it offered imported winter boots, caviar, Winston cigarettes, Pepsi, coffee beans, and a cognac that was labelled French but, according to widespread rumor, actually came from Armenia. The lines were short and the supplies were plentiful. A block or so away, a privately owned store had opened in a rented basement. It offered beauty soap, disposable razors and cigarette lighters, leather overcoats, television sets made in Germany, and boom boxes. Out on the street, booksellers set up sidewalk tables and peddled everything from sex manuals to translations of Stephen King and Dashiell Hammett.

In part, this modest abundance reflected a real increase in supplies, attributable to the reforms of Russian economic and travel regulations. A Kemerovo businessman named Sergei Kachur (he had been a doctor, but decided that that was no way to make a decent living) told me how he and his partners go to Moscow, buy hard currency on one of the new ruble-exchange markets, and send a buyer to Western Europe. The buyer looks for used goods, discontinued items, seconds—anything cheap enough to be affordable for Russian consumers—and brings them back into Russia. The partners sell them in the new, privately owned stores. With the profits, they begin the cycle again. All this, of course, would have been illegal several years ago.

But, particularly in the food stores, the reforms had suppressed demand more than they had increased supply. The sausage in Bekon ranged in price from eighty-eight to two hundred and ten rubles a kilogram—prices that required many people to spend virtually their entire salaries on food and to buy less than they used to. The director of a Kemerovo meat-packing plant told me he had enough sausage piled up in his warehouse to feed the city for a month—this though the plant was

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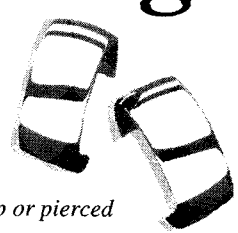

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producing about half the meat it produced three years ago.

Three years ago, meat, thanks to a state subsidy, sold in the stores for about four rubles a kilogram. Price was no object: if meat was available, people bought as much as the store would sell them. What they couldn't eat themselves they gave to friends or put out on their apartment balconies to freeze. In a sense, the excess meat was a form of insurance against the next shortage.

In some sectors, the Russian economy still operates this way. Gasoline was available in Kemerovo this winter for about a ruble seventy kopecks a litre, the rough equivalent of six and a half cents a gallon. Predictably, people stockpiled it. I met a driver named Zhenya who had bought half a ton of gasoline and stored it in a rented garage. His family owned a dacha with a vegetable garden in the countryside outside of Kemerovo. To beat the high cost of food, they needed to go back and forth to the dacha in the summer to work in the garden. Since he anticipated a shortage of gasoline or a price increase, or both, renting a garage and storing half a ton of fuel seemed to Zhenya to be perfectly rational behavior.

Russians have grown dependent on these kinds of prices, and most people in Kemerovo, Zhenya among them, will tell you that they advocate a market economy and, sometimes in the same sentence, that they deserve to get gasoline for six and a half cents a gallon forever. Even in the food sector, which was supposedly undergoing shock therapy, the Kemerovo city government found it advisable to do what it could to cushion the reforms. The city had a messy, complicated system of ration cards that supposedly entitled each family to buy staple items like milk, bread, sugar, butter, oil, vodka, and chocolate at controlled prices. If the ration system had worked as the city promised, it would have undermined the price reforms. But it didn't work that way, because the city didn't have enough money to fund it. Instead of a ration of meat for twenty-eight rubles a kilo, the cards bought only a kind of I.O.U., a promise that someday, when the city could afford it, the bearer would get that meat. The ration system did work, to a degree, for milk and bread, and the only long lines I saw in Kemerovo stores were in front of milk and bread counters.

Despite the various coupon schemes that had been instituted in Kemerovo, the new food prices drove some people to the brink of desperation. I called one afternoon on Vladimir Osipov to talk about the coke oven the Wobblies had helped to build in the twenties. Osipov was sixty, and he had worked at the coke oven most of his life. Cataracts—which he thought were probably caused by noxious gases at the plant—had nearly blinded him, and he was retired, living with his eighty-five-year-old mother, Yevdokhia. They had an apartment in one of Kemerovo's better buildings, originally built for members of the Party *nomenklatura*. Until a few years ago, most Russians, looking at their resources and their apartment, would probably have considered them reasonably well off. But when her son and I finished talking about the coke oven the old woman, wearing a faded mauve dress and house slippers, put a question to me which she had clearly been anxious to ask: "How do they treat pensioners in America?"

I told her that people who lived on Social Security alone could scrape by, but only that.

"At least they can live!" she exclaimed in a high-pitched voice. She and her son, she said, received four hundred and fifty rubles each as a monthly pension. Neither of them could work, or even leave the apartment. They depended on food deliveries, which used to come, through their former factories, at steeply discounted prices. Now, she said, they received only occasional packages, with, perhaps, a kilogram of meat, a few hundred grams of butter, a bit of sugar and oil. The packages cost a hundred and fifty rubles, and they lasted only two or three days.

I asked what they had eaten for lunch that day.

"We had borscht," she said. "We'll have borscht again for supper. I've

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Dwells upon an aeon. He has time, time enough
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Of his hundred senses. Half swimming,
Half drifting, an apparition just inches from where
A child's face dreams near the glass,
A blend of submarine delicacy and horror,
He advances in a welter of fragile reelings,
Volutions of a Hindu god wreathed in his own black wrath.
The silky bladder of his head is just a pump
To stoke the writhing of his coils, a gorgon
Hypnotized by its own eely music. Each tendril
Tapering to a whiplash, to a Mandelbrot point,
A vertigo at the mind's end, the slot-pupilled,
Analogous eye may as well have been forged
In the vapors of Jupiter—peerings of children
Are no part of his knowledge, and the thick glass
No more a barrier than the drab prison of tissue
Holding vision in the eye's tight translucence.
Ghost among ghosts, maniacal flowering, among the spun-glass
Architecture of jellyfish, feather-lipped anemone,
The five-pointed meat-stars atop their black steeples
Of hunger, and the mineral fury of snails whose small dreams
Pinwheel to a point, he glides free, majestic,
Through ocean-shifting aeons, silently slipping
In and out of the Devonian, the Jurassic, the Oligocene.

—John Lindgren

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forgotten what sausage is." She invited me to look at a black-and-white photograph on the wall. After a second, I realized that it was her portrait, taken many years ago. It showed a clear-eyed, strong-looking young woman with a broad forehead, her black hair pulled off her face. "I've lived in Kemerovo since 1925," she said. "I've worked all my life, and now how are we to live? I was a person then," she said, gesturing sadly at the photograph. "I'm not a person now."

ULTIMATELY, the government hoped, the higher food prices, combined with privatization of the collective-farming system, would stimulate more production on the farms. I rode south from Kemerovo one morning into an agricultural region where the pavement ended and the road consisted of plowed snow, packed dirt, and gravel. The wind blew clouds of snow across the road, and when a truck went by in the opposite direction the snow billowing up in its wake nearly blinded Zhenya, who was driving. Clumps of birch and evergreen trees broke up the vista of white rolling fields, populated by occasional small flocks of black-and-white magpies or red-winged finches called *sneguri*—a name derived from one of the dozens of Russian words relating to snow. Every few miles, a sign along the road would identify a collective farm whose name seemed to come right from a Vladimir Voinovich satire of Soviet life: "The Path to Communism," say, or "The Heritage of Ilyich."

I stopped at the headquarters of a collective farm called the New Path, in the village of Zhuravlevo—a village that I had heard was also the home of one of Kemerovo's most successful private farmers, a man named Anatoly Yermolaev. Older Russian villages sometimes have a certain charm, with brightly painted wooden filigree over their cottage windows, fertile gardens, fat geese pecking by the roadside, and perhaps a church in a central square. But Zhuravlevo reflected the same tired Soviet spirit that Kemerovo did. It consisted of perhaps two hundred drab cottages crowded together around an intersection. It had a school, a one-room grocery store, a House of Culture, which was closed, and about half a dozen long, low barns for pigs and cows. Piles of straw and animal feed littered the snow around the cottages. There was no church.

The management of the New Path worked in a white one-story house with a tin roof. Outside stood an aluminum bust of Lenin and a wooden sledge drawn by a shaggy, swaybacked brown horse. Inside, a dozen or so farm workers lounged, smoking and talking, in a cold, dark entrance hall. The farm's generator had broken down during the night, and they were waiting for an electrician to fix it. I walked into an office where half a dozen women, bundled up in coats and scarves, sat pecking at manual typewriters in the dim light coming through the windows. The farm's director, one of them told me, was out of town on a business trip, and she suggested that I might talk instead with its chief economist, Nina Mikhailovna Ryzhkova.

Ryzhkova was a short, slightly stout, pleasant woman with blue eyes, broad cheekbones, and matted red hair pinned down with blue plastic clips. She ushered me into a narrow office, painted a cold glossy blue, with lacy tendrils of frost gracing the outsides of the windowpanes. She had grown up on the New Path, she told me, where her father was the chief veterinarian. As a young woman, she had tried working in Kemerovo for a couple of years, but had come back to the farm when she realized that she was irremediably a country girl. She had been a Party member, she was forty-two years old; and on the previous day she had become a grandmother. "I'm not sure why you came here," she said. "We don't have anything to brag about."

The state organized the farm in 1929, during the height of Stalin's collectivization campaign, she said. Before that, a few individuals had farms around there, but the area was mostly virgin land. The farm had almost thirty-eight thousand acres, on which about nine hundred people lived. About five hundred of them worked, and the rest were children or pensioners. The workers cared for about twenty-eight hundred hogs and a herd of dairy cows, and grew grain to feed them. The farm had about fifty tractors, of which perhaps thirty were generally in working condition. Three of its hog barns were empty, because the farm couldn't afford to buy enough feed. "We could raise ten thousand hogs if we had something to feed them, but no one will give us feed," Ryzhkova complained.

I asked if she could tell me the farm's production figures for 1985, the last pre-*perestroika* year, and for 1991. She began hunting around the office, through files and papers stacked in a couple of bookcases. Finally, she pulled out the farm's 1985 report, written mostly in pencil, on coarse cream-colored paper that reminded me of the stock that American teachers a generation ago used to hand out to children for their art projects. She ran a finger down the pages and, pushing beads on a wooden abacus she kept on her desk, calculated the totals. Meat production had fallen sixteen per cent over those six years. Grain production was off fifty-six per cent. "Our rainfall is unsteady," she said. "We didn't have much last year."

I said I had heard that Anatoly Yermolaev, the man who had broken away from the collective farm to work on his own, had much higher productivity figures.

"I see what you're driving at, but the figures really aren't comparable," she said. "He has a lot of connections, and they give him feed, or money to buy feed." She had something else to say about him, and her voice took on a slightly accusatory tone. "He hires temporary workers," she said.

Sixty years ago, that accusation could have sent a farmer to his death. In Stalin's time, farmers who hired temporary workers were, by definition, kulaks, and Stalin had vowed to liquidate the kulaks as a class. All over European Russia and the Ukraine, Party zealots arrested the most successful, prosperous farmers in every village and exiled them to Siberia, or simply executed them on the spot, expropriating their land for the new collective farms. It seemed anachronistic, and vaguely chilling, to hear someone make that accusation again. I asked her where he could find people to hire in such a remote village. "Some of them are members of our collective who have been excluded for drunkenness," she replied. "They're people who get drunk for a while, then work, then get drunk again. Some are people who came and then didn't want to

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become members of the collective."

After thanking her, I walked down the road to the barns. In one of them, a long row of cows looked at me with curiosity. Fresh straw had been strewn on the concrete in front of them, but apart from that, no one was tending them. Outside the next barn, though the temperature was about ten degrees below zero, the cows were standing in a snow-covered corral, huddled against the side of the building to stay out of the wind. No one was working in that barn, either.

I walked back up the road to Anatoly Yermolaev's cottage. The window trim was painted blue and green, but the cottage was constructed mostly of unpainted logs; it had a small enclosed porch. He had a hectare of muddy land, crowded with gray, weather-beaten wooden outbuildings: an outhouse, a *banya*, some sheds for animals. Several things distinguished it from the other peasant homes I had seen: he had a car, a couple of trucks, and a new, concrete-and-steel house, half built, at the other end of the lot.

I found Yermolaev in a small enclosure formed by the cottage and a few of the outbuildings. He was tall, fair-skinned, and blue-eyed, and he was wearing a golden fur *shapka* on his head, a parka, and rubber boots. He had enormous, strong hands; he looked as if he could pick up a bowling ball and toss split-finger fastballs with it. Bits of wet, red blood flecked his face and clothes, catching the winter sunlight. The odors of straw and manure floated on the cold breeze.

He, his thirteen-year-old son, and a helper were filling an order for a ton of meat he had received from one of the mines in Kemerovo. Two dead hogs lay before him on a table, and there was a stack of freshly killed carcasses piled neatly against a shed and covered with a tarpaulin. He had a propane torch in one hand, with which he singed the hair on the hogs' mottled pink hides. Once the hair was singed, his son and the helper scraped it off with knives.

I asked Yermolaev how he killed the hogs.

"With this knife," he replied, grinning a little at my naïveté. He held up a curved six-inch blade. "They don't feel much."

Was the helper, I asked, a hired hand?

"No, a relative—my cousin," Yermolaev replied. "I never use hired labor." His usual work force, he said, consisted of his son, a grown daughter and her husband, his wife, Lyudmilla, and himself.

The Yermolaevs lived in intimate proximity to their animals, I found as he took me for a walk around his lot. Next to the cottage, under a roof but exposed to the weather, stood a row of about twenty small cages in which he was raising Arctic foxes, silver foxes, and minks for the Russian fur industry. The Kemerovo mine that was buying the ton of pork had provided him with the capital to buy them. A few steps away was a barn, and he opened its door. About seventy hogs were lying, packed haunch against flank, in a large, fetid room. Startled a bit by the opening door, the nearer ones snorted, snuffled, and rearranged themselves, setting off a rippling wave of pink flesh that bounced against the rear wall and rebounded toward us before the animals settled back into their winter languor. The farm had nearly three hundred hogs, Yermolaev said. I did a rough calculation. It suggested that the Yermolaev family, with five members, produced about ten times as much pork per worker as the collective farm.

Yermolaev shut the door, and we walked to the far end of the lot, where the concrete-and-steel frame of his new house stood. He had managed to enclose only the basement before winter set in, and he had given that space not to himself but to his bees. He had about two hundred pale-green boxes containing hives of sleeping bees. In the spring, he would set them out in the countryside to make honey.

Yermolaev glanced at my numb nose and suggested that we continue our conversation indoors. We took off our shoes on the porch and ducked through the low doorway of the cottage into the kitchen, where his wife was making

lunch on a tiled stove that burned coal and heated all four rooms. Lyudmilla Yermolaeva wore a brown dress, heavy wool stockings, and red socks pulled up over the stockings. When she smiled and shook hands, she showed off three gold incisors. She stayed behind in the kitchen when we went into the living room. In a bookcase there, Yermolaev kept translations of Mark Twain and James Fenimore Cooper, two American writers who have long been widely read in Russian. A television set below the books was tuned to an Olympic hockey game.

"We work about fourteen hours a day," he said when I asked him about his routine. "We start by seven o'clock in the winter and maybe five o'clock in the summer. Once we're up, we may have tea, but the feeding of the animals comes first. It's all hand work—there's no mechanization. That takes about two, two and a half hours. Then we have breakfast. Today, it was bread, cheese, and tea. Then we might do more work preparing feed. We clean up the barns and gather the manure. In the summer, we take it out to the wheat fields with the tractor. Then it's time to feed the animals again. There are some changes from day to day. Sometimes we might work with the bees. In the summer, we gather the honey. In the winter, we get the boxes ready."

Lyudmilla Yermolaeva came in from the kitchen and stood in the doorway, and I asked her how her routine differed from her husband's.

"I do the same work," she said. "And I cook and do the laundry." Anatoly brought the table in from the kitchen and set it up in the living room. Lyudmilla served a lunch of fish soup, cheese, brown bread, and honey from the family's hives.

The honeybees, it turned out, had laid the foundation for their enterprise. "My mother was Ukrainian," Yermolaev told me. "She came to Siberia in 1940. My father was a soldier, and he came to Kemerovo after he was wounded in the war. They met here. I was born during the war and grew up in a village five kilometres from Kemerovo. My hobby was keeping bees." He moved to the New Path as a young man and became its chief beekeeper. From a drawer he pulled out a stack of medals and certificates he had earned for his skill in beekeeping. While he worked for the collec-

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tive farm, he built up his own hives; the wildflowers that bees used to make honey were among the few things the state did not try to control. He sold the honey in the small peasants' markets permitted under the old system, and he accumulated several hundred thousand rubles in savings.

It sounded almost as if the old kulak traits of thrift and industry had been passed along genetically to Yermolaev. I asked whether his ancestors had been kulaks. "My mother came to Siberia when Ukraine was going through a repression," he replied. "Several Ukrainian families moved to the village at the same time. Perhaps her family were kulaks. I don't know."

From whatever source, he had obviously developed an unusual sense of responsibility and individuality. In the course of our conversation, Lyudmilla Yermolaeva remarked that the neighbors on the New Path had sometimes criticized the Yermolaevs because they required their children to do farm chores after school. The Soviet ethos had it that students were not supposed to work, except on special student harvest brigades organized by the Party. Most Russians I know had not held a job until they completed their education and the state assigned them to one. The Yermolaevs had always felt differently about work.

Yermolaev quit the Party in 1984, prior to *perestroika*, because he disagreed with the arbitrary arrests and house searches that took place during Yuri Andropov's discipline campaign. When the laws changed to permit private farming, in 1990, he became the first—and for a long time the only—farmer from the New Path to insist that the local authorities allot him his share of land, about seventy-five acres, and let him leave the collective. "The authorities propagandized against private farming," he said. "They forbade certain things, like maintaining livestock. They looked for ways to prevent it. And they're still trying. That's why the laws on privatization aren't working quickly. I had to fight for four months to get my land."

Yermolaev's beekeeping capital helped him to overcome this opposition. With it he was able to buy trucks and tractors and other equipment. He had spent about half a million rubles in his first year of operation, he told me, and made a profit of about a hundred and fifty thousand. He had plans to buy another two hundred and forty acres of land, so that he could grow his own animal feed. He worried that the state might change the rules somehow and ruin his business, perhaps by subsidizing the collective farms so that they could undersell him. Barring that kind of interference, though, he seemed certain to succeed.

It was less certain that any of the present members of the collective would duplicate his achievement. After seeing Yermolaev's success, eight members had recently asserted their right to a piece of land and their desire to become private farmers. The collective-farm management had given them their land, Nina Ryzhkova had told me, but it had refused to give them any machinery. The farmers wishing to go private represented less than two per cent of the collective. She insisted, with arithmetic logic, that this was not enough to justify giving them any of the collective's fifty tractors. Yermolaev told me he planned to do what he could to help out the new entrepreneurs with his equipment, but their chances of succeeding obviously depended on their obtaining equipment they could not afford to buy. I had asked Ryzhkova what she expected Siberian agriculture to look like in ten years. "I think there will be collective farms," she had replied. "It's not realistic to expect to see only private farms."

Anatoly Yermolaev held the contrary view. "I think that the reform policies will force the collective farms to break up," he said.

AS I left Zhuravlevo, I asked Lyudmilla Yermolaeva whether the village's name had anything to do with *zhuravl*, the Russian word for "crane." It did, she said. She remembered seeing large flocks of cranes in the fields around the village when she and her husband first moved there, twenty-five years ago. The villagers used to say that the birds wintered in Egypt and flew to Siberia in the summer. But about fifteen years ago the cranes started to disappear, and she hadn't seen one in a long time. She assumed that environmental degradation had caused their disappearance, but she couldn't even guess which of the many sources of pollution was responsible.

That did not surprise me, because until recently Siberians had been given very little information about their environment. I met one evening with

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Yuri Kaznin, a physician, in his apartment near the center of Kemerovo. Kaznin, who is forty-eight, has lived in Siberia since 1950, when the state transferred his father from Byelorussia to serve in the financial section of the Kemerovo oblast government. He remembered his two first impressions of Siberia. When he arrived, on May 1st, he was wearing short pants, because spring had arrived in European Russia, and in Kemerovo that day it snowed. And he remembered the smell of gas. The kids in his new neighborhood told him that the gas leaked from a poorly built factory nearby. No one, of course, asked openly if the gas was harmful. "This was Stalin's time, you understand?" he said to me.

Kaznin went to the Kemerovo Medical Institute and became a researcher specializing in infectious diseases. The data available to him told him that the water supply in Kemerovo was quite drinkable, but by the mid-eighties he had begun to suspect otherwise. "There were no data in the open Soviet literature about the effects of toxins in the water—it was all secret," he recalled. "In 1984, I was in an autonomous lab at the institute; it was headed by Sergei Sergeyev, an old student of mine, very talented. I went to him with the idea of conducting an experiment, giving rats water taken from the Tom, downstream from the pollution sources. He allowed me to do the research, quietly, outside the plan. Most of my colleagues in the project were also old students of mine. On their own time, they helped me dissect the rats, and so on. I did this because we had no way then—no instruments—to determine what was in the water. After six months, the rats suffered irreversible pathological changes in their livers, kidneys, and nervous systems. A lot of them died. In 1987, I described these experiments on television. It was the first time in the history of the Kuzbass that someone had spoken openly about pollution. The first secretary of the oblast Communist Party then was Vadim Bakatin"—he went on to become head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and of the K.G.B. under Mikhail Gorbachev—"and he went on television two days later and called me part of an irresponsible element. But I got lots of letters from people, an enormous archive about the environment. In 1988, I helped start the Green Movement here."

A year later, the voters in Kemerovo elected Kaznin to the Congress of People's Deputies in Moscow, and there he served on the environmental committee and was able to learn much more about the Kuzbass's problems. "When I became a deputy, my lab could get funding for wider experiments on animals," he said. "We bought instruments that can analyze the river water. It turned out that we had a lot of organic chloride compounds in it. They can cause cancer, birth defects in children, and a whole range of other things." As a deputy, he also had access to satellite photos of the area. "In the pictures from space, the Kuzbass cities are generally not visible, because of air pollution. They're a black spot on the white snow. The Kuzbass is a zone of ecological catastrophe."

Kaznin volunteered to show me some of the nearby sources of pollution. Leaving his apartment, we walked to Sovietsky Prospekt, in the center of the city, to catch a bus. Water was dripping from icicles on the buildings we passed. The temperature in Kemerovo this February generally hovered around freezing, with occasional spells when it dropped well below that. Siberians tend not to make too much of the cold. One evening when the temperature was approaching thirty below, the local newscaster remarked that it was winter outside, gave the temperature, and went on to the sports. But Kaznin, like many Kemerovans, thought the winter abnormally mild in comparison to the long, hard frosts he remembered from his childhood. Once, he recalled, the temperature dropped to about fifty below zero, and the main bridge over the Tom snapped in the middle from the contraction of its metal. He could not recall many days in recent years when the temperature had fallen to more than twenty below. He thought the climate was changing as a result of pollution.

We waited as red buses rolled by, some already full and some going in the wrong direction. I remarked that the air did not look or smell any worse than the air in most cities. It was better than it had been a few years ago, he replied. During atmospheric inversions then, there had been days when he could not stand on one side of Sovietsky Prospekt and see the buildings on the other side. The city would occasionally warn parents not to let their children play outdoors. Apparently, the disastrous decline in Soviet industrial production over the past few years had helped with the air-pollution problem. The factories produced less coke and chemicals and, as a result, less smoke.

Finally, a cluster of three buses came along, the last one nearly empty. As we rode in it down the street, Kaznin pointed out the factories. They lay behind high walls of worn brick, which hid all but their smokestacks and pipe mazes from the street: an electrical-engine plant, a carbide factory, and, finally, the coke oven. Many of them, he said, came to Kemerovo during the Second World War, when the government tried to move its essential industries beyond the reach of the German Army. After the war, the factories stayed. We got off at a curve in the street, next to a neighborhood known as New Colony. He warned me not to go near it. "It's the worst neighborhood in Kemerovo," he said. "They'll rob you and strip your clothes off and cut you up in there."

The Coke & Chemical Factory, as it is formally known, was on the other side of the street. It emits, in Kaznin's opinion, more pollution than any other factory in the city. The original Bolshevik plan for developing Siberia linked Kemerovo's coal to the iron ore in the Ural Mountains to the northwest. The iron-ore smelters of the Urals required coke—a processed form of coal that is produced by heating raw coal in an oven, cut off from outside air, at temperatures of more than two thousand degrees, until its volatile constituents are driven off. Almost as soon as the first mine was opened on the right bank of the Tom, work began on a coke oven on the left bank, linked to the mine by a conveyor that clattered over the river. The Wobblies who came to Kemerovo in the early nineteen-twenties helped to complete the first coke oven, and some of the bricks they laid still stand, although the old oven itself has worn out and been retired.

We walked around the brick wall facing Sovietsky Prospekt to the back of the factory to get a better view. The yard inside was hazy, framed by a tangled web of rusty pipelines and girders. A brick smokestack that looked to be about twenty stories high pumped

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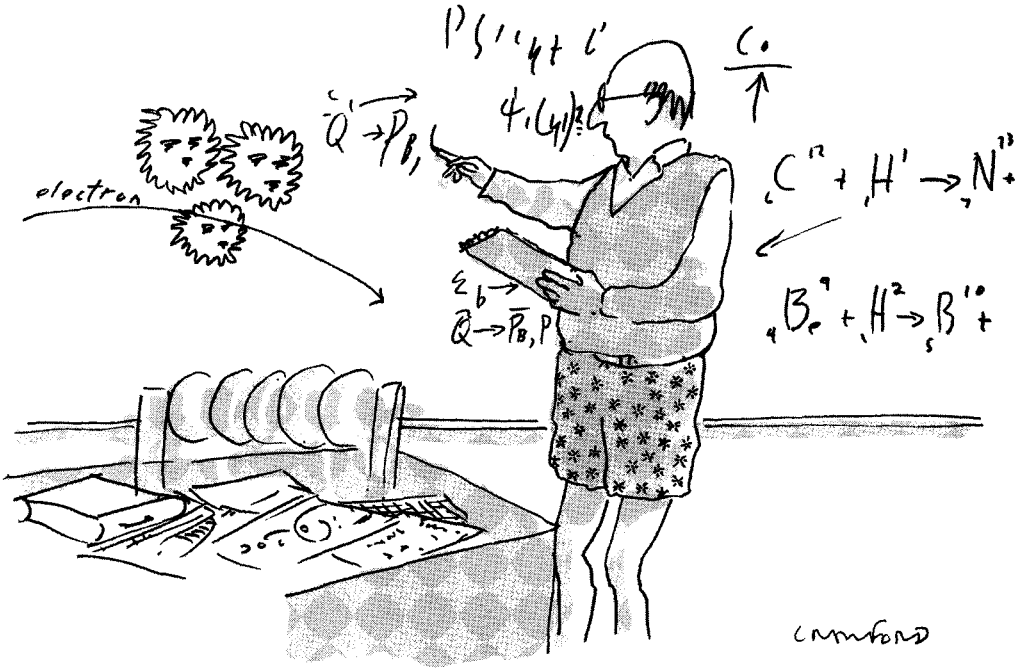
an unbroken plume of brown smoke into the night air; a stiff southeast wind blew it toward the center of town. Six or seven smaller chimneys spewed a white smoke, which dissipated more rapidly. Every minute or so, a tongue of flame leaped out into the air.

Kaznin believes that the Coke & Chemical Factory emits several dangerous pollutants, including benzopyrenes and nitrous oxides. "You could lose consciousness walking around in there," he said angrily as we peered into the yard on our evening tour. "Kemerovo and Novokuznetsk have been treated as colonies, exploited by the center for coal, metal, chemicals, and other crude, dirty industries. The cities in the Kuzbass are too small to handle such large concentrations of industry."

For several years, Kaznin and the other local environmentalists had been advocating closing the coke factory. They almost succeeded. Some of the older batteries in the factory have shut down, partly for environmental reasons, and partly because the general industrial breakdown in Russia over the past few years has reduced coke production by about two-thirds. But the present oblast government does not want to cope with the unemployment of the two thousand workers still at the plant or with the loss of the plant's export revenues. It is one of Kemerovo's major earners of hard currency. "If we were to close factories that damage the environment, we'd simply have to close all the industry in Russia, and we'd return quickly to the Stone Age," Mikhail Kislyuk, the Yeltsin-appointed leader of the Kemerovo oblast government, told me. "It would be a reversion to the Bolshevik tactic of destroying everything down to the base and starting again to build a New World."

From Kaznin's perspective, Kislyuk was choosing slow extinction. Back in his apartment, Kaznin began pulling documents out of envelopes and folders, and passing along information he had picked up during the past few years. In 1985, the life expectancy for men in the oblast was forty-nine, sixteen years less than the average Soviet male's life expectancy, which, in turn, was five or six years lower than the life expectancy of males in the United States. By the standards of the Kuzbass, Slava Golikov's father, when he died, at forty-seven, had not died particularly young.



PURE RESEARCH GOES ON APACE AT THE CONTINUOUS-ELECTRON-BEAM-ACCELERATOR FACILITY AS A NUCLEAR PHYSICIST PROBES THE NATURE OF SUBATOMIC PARTICLES IN DAISY-PATCH PRINT BROADCLOTH BOXERS FROM J.CREW.

THE sense of fear and helplessness engendered by the environmental problems of the Kuzbass contributed to a harshly self-critical mood that I found nearly everywhere I went in Kemerovo. Yuri Kaznin told me bitterly that the average Siberian's appreciation of public issues went no further than their effect on his stomach—"Will I be hungry tomorrow or not?" Very few people I spoke to expressed much optimism about the foreseeable future. From the enforced self-congratulatory bombast of the Soviet years, the popular mood had shifted to something like what Dostoyevski once noted about pre-revolutionary Russia: "Our people display their deficiencies with relentless force and are ready to talk about their defects before the whole world and to complain endlessly about themselves. Sometimes they are even unfair to themselves in the name of fierce love for justice and truth."

The studied pessimism of the Russian government in Moscow, which is hoping to attract Western aid, amplifies this message of despair and broadcasts it loudly to the world. But, as time went by in Kemerovo, what I saw and what I did not see began increasingly to contradict the bleak assessments I was hearing. Conditions were difficult, and the problems were enormous, but they were no worse, and in many respects they were better, than the tribulations that many Russians can easily remember from the Soviet period. Despite the dire predictions of last autumn, and the plight of the elderly, there were no food riots. Although the remnants of the old official trade-union structure tried to organize a general strike in early March, those efforts failed.

Kemerovo has seen a few, weak manifestations of the xenophobic Russian nationalism that has been touted as the rising political force in the country. Perhaps twenty demonstrators showed up one day in February outside the building where Mikhail Kislyuk, who is Jewish, works. For about twenty minutes, they carried placards suggesting that he emigrate to Israel. Then they dispersed. When Kislyuk spoke with me, he dismissed them as a fringe group.

Nearly all the people I talked to in Kemerovo said they personally wanted to see Russia become a democratic state with a market economy. No one thought this would be easy. Though people could and did criticize particular aspects of Yeltsin's reform program, such as the decision to raise prices before

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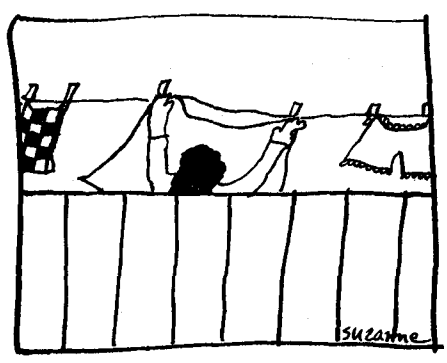
privatizing enterprises, no one suggested that a dictatorship of one kind or another could do the job better. Kemerovo, in fact, has the makings of an open, competitive political system. Groups like Yuri Kaznin's environmentalists can and do participate in the local government. The old Communist Party organization leads the biggest opposition group, but since last year's failed coup the ex-Communists seem reconciled to the idea that they must attract popular support if they are to return to power. They try to do so by promising somehow to cushion the population from the pain of Yeltsin's reforms. In fact, they reflect the same opposition that Yeltsin faces at the national level, which tried to brake his economic-reform program at the Congress of People's Deputies in April. But Yeltsin's standing in public-opinion polls remains high.

I kept encountering signs that Siberians have begun to create new, independent civic and business structures, which are struggling to replace the old state institutions or just to prod them in new directions. While I was in Kemerovo, I was approached by the leader of an organization of parents of handicapped children which had been founded in December to lobby for their interests with the local governments. He wanted me to help them make contact with similar groups in the United States. Eventually, he said, the group hoped to establish sheltered workshops and special schools for its children. The new businesses range from private farming operations, like Anatoly Yermolaev's, to an unnamed coöperative café selling a quick, polite cup of coffee for seven rubles in a basement across the street from the massive old state theatre.

One afternoon in Kemerovo, I met a young man I will call Sergei Soloukh, because that is his pen name. Sergei had a soft, boyish face behind eyeglasses; he wore jeans and peculiarly Soviet mouse-gray shoes. In a way, he had been in the vanguard of Siberia's transformation. Sergei told me he had spent his student days, in the late seventies, in a semi-underground cult of Western pop culture. Its members wore jeans and T-shirts before those styles became ubiquitous in Russia, and they let their hair grow as long as school authorities would tolerate. "We knew each other by our jeans, or, if there were no jeans, then by some other clothes. I had a T-shirt, for instance, with the logo from the Beatles' 'Let It Be' album on it," he explained. "The T-shirt wasn't a problem at school, but the hair was. I was in the reserve-officer training program when I was at the institute. I remember that when I had to have an identification picture made for the Army a girlfriend helped me put my hair up so it wouldn't show in the photo. Now rock is everywhere, but in the nineteen-seventies it wasn't. Still, we had a lot of records. In Kemerovo, there was an enormous amount of black-market traffic. Say a Deep Purple record came out in London. We'd have it two or three months later. It was expensive. My stipend at the institute was seventy-five rubles a month, and a good English or American record might cost sixty or seventy rubles." Recklessly, they used marijuana. "Everyone knew where to go and how to get it," he recalled. "It cost just kopecks. It wasn't a business. We called it *anasha*, which is a word from Central Asia, where they grew it." The authorities, he believed, tolerated a limited amount of drug trafficking among students, because catching a student with drugs provided convenient leverage for turning that student into an informer.

After completing a degree in mine engineering in Kemerovo, Sergei moved to the Moscow area to do graduate work in computer science. There his tastes stayed Western, but they turned to literature. In Moscow, before *perestroika*, Western literature was not a dilettante's pastime. To indulge in it, Sergei listened clandestinely to the BBC and pushed himself to improve his English until he could read it freely. Later, he taught himself French, because he wanted to read Céline in the original. Books were available, thanks to the capital's contacts with the outside. "In Moscow, you could buy any book," he said. "I bought Henry Miller.



I liked him very much—'Black Spring' even more than 'Tropic of Cancer' or the other erotic fiction. I read Vonnegut—'Slaughterhouse Five,' 'Cat's Cradle,' 'Breakfast of Champions.' As a research assistant, I got a hundred and fifty rubles a month, and I might buy three books. Sometimes I'd sell one book to get money to buy another."

Sergei began to write short, satiric pieces himself. Some of them were published, and in 1981 he won a youth newspaper's prize for the best story of that year. He married, supported himself as a research fellow, and wrote. He was part of the Soviet intelligentsia, living as private a life as he could, maintaining his distance from the Party but not openly rebelling against it. Then, back in Kemerovo, his mother died, leaving his father alone in a much bigger apartment than Sergei could ever hope to have in Moscow. An opportunity to make an easy living teaching a few classes in a Kemerovo institute arose, so he moved back, reasoning that he would have more time and space for his writing. In 1989, he finished his first novel, called "Shizgara." The word came from the way he and his friends, listening with vague comprehension to the words of their black-market records, had mangled the refrain—"She's got it"—of a favorite Western rock tune of the late sixties, "Venus." The book was about the Siberian student world of those days, and it began with this sentence: "The chairman of the Electromechanical Department of the Southern Siberian Mining Institute, Sergei Mikhailovich Grachik, was reputed to be a complete idiot." So when he sent it to publishers in Moscow he told them he wanted to use a pseudonym.

It was not just that he did not want to risk offending the administration of the institute where he taught, he said. He simply found it more convenient to be known to his neighbors in Kemerovo as a teacher. "This city is a very material city," he explained. "The first question people ask when you publish a story is how much you got paid for it. No one cares about the style. They ask, 'How much?' You say, 'Thirty rubles.' They ask how long you spent on it, and you tell them two days. 'Well, that's nothing, thirty rubles for two days,' they say. So, for people here I'm an

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instructor in the Computer Science Department. Only two or three people, apart from my family, know I write."

The fact is that he had sold his novel for a handsome sum by the standards of the time. In 1989, one of Moscow's new, independent publishers offered him a thirty-thousand-ruble advance, half of it up front, and promised a huge first printing. At the time, he was earning two hundred and fifty rubles a month as a teacher. He felt rich. The book slowly made its way through the editing process, and reached final page proofs at the end of last year. But by that time the price of paper had soared, forcing newspapers and publishers all over Russia into bankruptcy. Sergei's publisher went under. When I met him, he had just come back from Moscow, where he had spent much of what remained of his advance to photocopy the proofs and have them bound. If he did not find another publisher, at least he would have the pleasure of seeing his work between hard covers.

He invited me to dinner at his home one evening, and before we ate he showed me some of his treasures. He had a shelf full of record albums, stored in one of the big dark wood-veneer bookcases manufactured by the Soviet furniture industry. He reached behind the records and pulled out hardcover first editions of "Catch-22" and "Something Happened," by Joseph Heller. He preferred "Something Happened," he said, although he understood that "Catch-22" had sold better in the West. There was a yellowing copy of the famous edition of *Novy Mir*, the Russian literary journal, that published Solzhenitsyn's "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" back during Khrushchev's brief thaw.

He had a question, he said, about two American novels, "The Great Gatsby" and "Goodbye, Columbus." He had read them, and he knew they were highly regarded in the West, but he could not understand why. Whatever it was that made them good had eluded him.

Perhaps, I suggested, it was because both novels dealt with the struggle to vault from one social class to a higher one. American readers readily understood it. Maybe he had not.

Sergei thought about that. He had never been aware of social classes, he said, at least as they were defined by

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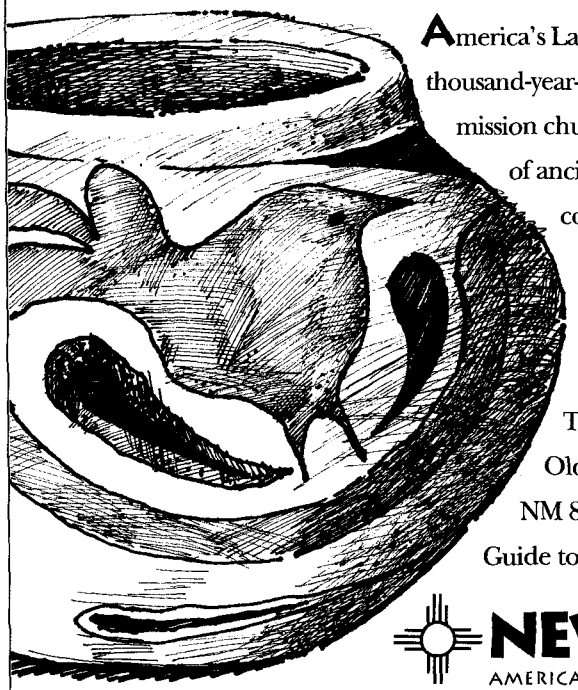

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wealth. In the old system, there had been the Party *nomenklatura*, which had power and some wealth, but he had always felt a basic contempt for them and their ideology and had never wanted to join them. He had divided the rest of the people into two groups—those who thought and those who didn't. It had mattered to him that his wife, Olga, had an education and worked as an anthropologist. He had not cared at all what her parents did, or how much money they had. Those days, he supposed, might be ending.

A COUPLE of nights later, at a dinner party, I met a thin, intense young man of about Sergei's age named Sasha Plebukh. He had a new Japanese video camera, and he was filming the guests as they sat around the table drinking vodka and cognac. He flipped a switch to replay what he had just filmed, and let people watch themselves cavort. Sasha was in the construction business, and he readily agreed to my request that he show me what he was doing.

To get into his office, in downtown Kemerovo, I had to squeeze past a stack of television sets in cartons, near the door. He uses them, he said, as compensation for his workers, who prefer them to rubles. He had a computer, a fax machine, a portable telephone, and a personal copier in his office, and his voice was hoarse from cigarettes and from hurried conversations with tax accountants, construction engineers, and other employees who streamed through his office.

He and his partners, he told me, had founded the company on the base of an old Communist Youth League construction firm. In the old days, it had built big apartment complexes for young families, complete with the amenities that the planners deemed appropriate for Soviet society. Now the company was on its own, and Sasha had borrowed three million rubles from a bank to build three single-family houses for a coal mine in a town called Kedrovka, outside the city; the mine had promised to pay an average of one million two hundred thousand rubles for each. Sasha proudly showed me the plans. They included a "biological toilet," which was sold by another private business, based in Moscow. The new houses would need no outhouses.

One of Sasha's foremen thereupon drove me from Kemerovo out to Kedrovka, a town that had been built to service a vast open-pit coal mine. (Like Beryozovsky, it derived its name from a tree—in this instance, the Siberian cedar.) The town consisted mostly of the same five-story barracks-style apartment blocks that dominated Beryozovsky, clustered around the mine's headquarters. The temperature had dropped below zero, inducing boys (but not men) to drop the earflaps of their *shapki*. They looked a little like basset hounds as they walked home from school. A truck was spreading coal slag on the icy main road to give the cars idling in front of the headquarters building some purchase when they took off on errands.

We drove out from the center of town, through an empty, snow-covered little valley, and up onto a hillside, where a yellow construction crane towered over a copse of birch trees. The members of Sasha's crew were hard at work. They had a log fire going, to heat sand and melt snow so they could mix concrete. The houses under construction looked like an effort to take the styles of the wooden Siberian cottage and the concrete apartment block and merge them into something better. They were of brick, sloppily pointed, with concrete slabs for the floors and ceilings. But they would have mansard roofs, bay windows, and two or three bedrooms each in addition to the biological toilets. Behind each of them stood a low, brick outbuilding that would eventually become a combined garage, sauna, and stall for a cow or chickens. The foreman told me that the mine planned to give one house to its chief engineer, and one to its deputy director; the director had not decided who would get the third. When the new householders moved in, they would be upwind from the smokestack of the mine's heating plant, and they would have a view of the copse of birch trees and the little valley. They would be living, I thought, in one of Siberia's first suburbs.

—ROBERT CULLEN

•

WILL THE PERSON who called me July 9, 1986 telling me she was 6 months pregnant please call me again only on a weekday morning between 7:30 and 8:30.—*Adv. in the Crawfordsville (Ind.) Journal Review.*

And if there's a six-year-old around, we'd like to say hello.

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

Menagerie

WITH typical slangy eloquence, the painter and movie critic Manny Farber used to make a provocative distinction between "white elephant art" and "termite art." To Farber, films that fell into the first category, ranging from "Requiem for a Heavyweight" to Antonioni's "La Notte," were "reminiscent of the enamelled tobacco humidors and wooden lawn ponies bought at white elephant auctions decades ago"; they were overwrought in both senses of the word, treating "every inch of the screen and film as a potential area for prizeworthy creativity." The termite art Farber championed, whether by Laurel and Hardy or Howard Hawks, "goes always forward eating its own boundaries, and, likely as not, leaves nothing in its path other than the signs of eager, industrious, unkempt activity." White elephants and termites became Farber's ruling simile, with the former tied to "the realm of celebrity and affluence" and the latter encompassing everything good and disreputable. Farber's essays (collected in a 1971 volume called "Negative Space," which, regrettably, is out of print) awaken an intense nostalgia for the unpretentious smorgasbord of the American movie past. Even baby boomers feel that nostalgia as they haunt revival theatres for some of Farber's favorites, like Chuck Jones' cartoons, Val Lewton's suggestive and literate horror quickies, and the low-budget action specialties of Don Siegel and Sam Fuller.

Unaffected B pictures, made fast and on the cheap, were the most fecund source of termite art in movies. These days, when a neo-B emerges on the big screen and wins some attention, as "Deep Cover" did this spring, it's apt to have an air of self-importance that's absolutely white-elephant-like, as the filmmakers lay out intellectual positions in scenes that are conceived like placards and come equipped with slogans. Allen Baron's "rediscovered" film noir "Blast of Silence" (now playing in New York), a 1961 chronicle of the death of a hit man, is equally fancy, mixing a tense, stark photographic style and eerie location footage of Manhattan at Christmastime with a non-stop voice-over that reeks of alienation. The smattering of termite art in Baron's movie comes from Larry Tucker's creepy, incongruously soft-spoken performance as a small-time illegal gun dealer who babies his pet rodents.

The flea-market finds that were a staple of American moviegoing in general and of genre-hopping in particular have all but vanished. How can they exist in a pop-movie culture dominated by big-budget effects and robots? As you can see from the Jean-Claude Van Damme–Dolph Lundgren robo-drama "Universal Soldier," termite art can't bite through cyborg flesh. There are, though, a few funny notions knocking around the wreckage. In the setup—a Vietnam War massacre—Van Damme, a righteous American soldier, and Lundgren, an unhinged sergeant, kill each other when Van Damme decides to stop Lundgren's slaughter of the innocent. When they're regenerated as fighting machines, their memories are chemically suppressed, but their pasts leak into their minds anyway. They keep reliving their death scene, with Lundgren offing suspected enemies and traitors (that is, anyone who gets in his way) and Van Damme moaning about saving the innocent and returning to his Louisiana hearth. Audiences who have endured two decades of self-serious post-Vietnam melodramas might enjoy seeing these two lugs bring the war back home, since they play their Vietnam-flashback nightmare as comic-book black comedy. The filmmakers cover for Van Damme's Belgian accent by making him a Cajun, but not as much thought went into camouflaging Lundgren's Swedish accent—maybe he's of American-Neanderthal extraction. The director, Roland Emmerich, contrasts Van Damme's dumb lassitude with the hyperactivity of a cartoon newshound heroine (frisky Ally Walker). But if "Universal Soldier" is quicker than a lot of recent clobberfests, its virtues are only relative. The garish mayhem

"Remember laps?"

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culminates in the inevitable thudding confrontation between the martial artists Lundgren and Van Damme; to make it through, you'd better have a high vicarious-pain threshold.

IF the commercial glorification of the action-genre movie has been helping to wipe out termite art, the videocassette revolution hasn't been a godsend, either. Although many theatrical failures have got a second chance by being issued on cassettes and laser disks, I can't think of a single film that bypassed theatres, went straight into video release, and garnered any special following. Apparently, movies need to be recognized as movies before they can succeed as videos. "One False Move," a contemporary film noir directed by Carl Franklin and written by Billy Bob Thornton and Tom Epperson, was fated for the video dumping ground until a couple of critics championed it, and now it's opening at theatres around the country. "One False Move" will play better on the big screen, but it's too bad everyone can't stumble upon it the way those first critics did, without the burden of blurbs heralding it as a milestone. The film is skillfully acted and welcomely unpredictable. It starts out as a herky-jerky exploitation movie, then turns into something else.

The premise is rudimentary: after a jolting series of execution-style killings, a trio of crooks go on the lam from Los Angeles to Star City, Arkansas, where two L.A. lawmen and a local sheriff lie in wait. What saves the opening sequences is the inspired pairing of a black sociopath, Pluto (Michael Beach), and a white psychopath, Ray (played by Thornton, the co-writer). Pluto glides through life on criminal cruise control, not letting any mere emotion give him pause, while Ray is walking nitro, ready to explode at any moment. Beach's inhuman brilliance and Thornton's earthy edginess make them deadly companions. Cynda Williams is enticingly inscrutable as Fantasia, Ray's African-American lover; she hits on marvellous combinations of ingenuousness and amorality, even when the script plays peekaboo with motivation. As these three wend their way cross-country, Star City's sheriff, Dale (Hurricane) Dixon, played by Bill Paxton, tries to persuade the visiting metropolitan cops (Jim Metzler and Earl Billings) that he's ripe for big-time law enforcement. Disappointingly, Paxton, that young reliable, lays on the hick ingratiation, but when Hurricane realizes what a joke he's become to the West Coast cops Paxton's performance takes on new dimension and gravity. This good ole boy grows into a good ole man.

As "One False Move" proceeds, it leaves wholesale carnage as well as hokum far behind. Franklin, an actor turned director, creates extreme uneasiness with the slightest means: when Ray and Fantasia stop at a convenience store at the same time as a state trooper (and the trooper then follows them and Pluto down the road), Franklin doesn't oversell the suspense with trendy camerawork. (His few stabs at virtuoso moviemaking fall flat.) The movie peaks in an extended, turbulent night scene between Hurricane and Fantasia. Paxton and Williams are superbly, intimately attuned: their welter of sexual and racial confusions cuts deeper than anything in last year's hyped A movie "Jungle Fever."

ON the white-elephant front, there's "The Best Intentions," which won this year's Golden Palm at Cannes. To American moviegoers who have endured "sex, lies, and videotape," "Wild at Heart," and "Barton Fink," that award has come to function as an early warning signal: Beware the Curse of the Golden Palm. "The Best Intentions" isn't the worst of Cannes's recent honorees ("Barton Fink" is hard to beat). It boasts the built-in interest of a script by Ingmar Bergman, dramatizing the courtship and early married life of his parents. Bille August directed, and Jorgen Persson did the cinematography; their square filmmaking has an antique sheen. But they've made an orderly movie about disorderly conduct. At three hours, the drama, about the mismatch between a tormented, self-denying pastor, Henrik Bergman (Samuel Froler), and a coddled bourgeois woman, Anna Akerblom (Pernilla August, Cannes's "best actress"), is one prolonged, unrevealing study in frustration. Of course we know that these two won't live happily ever after: they did give birth to Ingmar Bergman. Our knowledge of the domestic crises that pervade Bergman's great œuvre, even at its sunniest, is this film's cross to bear, and the moviemakers do nothing to lighten it. With its inexorable depiction of increasing marital woe, "The Best Intentions" is the cinematic equivalent of predestination. Except for the expressive Max von Sydow (in the role of Anna's father), the actors don't operate in a climate of free will; they register carefully prescribed dollops of anguish. Stefan Nilsson's music relies on a piano theme that is meant to be ineffably tender and melancholy, and is repeated so often that you feel like shooting the piano player.

The script marks Bergman's most ambitious attempt to understand the parents he excoriated through most of his life and art. It's been hailed as an act of love, simply because he has chosen to see his mother and father as physically attractive young people. Others might view the saga as a punitive and staggeringly neat Freudian fantasy—the film ends before little Ingmar arrives to wreak further havoc on his parents. "The Best Intentions" does have a sound romantic foundation. Inevitably, we root for the struggling theology student and his wealthy best friend's sister to marry and overcome their differences, despite the disapproval and doubts of Anna's and Henrik's mothers (Ghita Norby and Mona Malm). As the action progresses, though, Bergman is determined to prove that mothers know best. Henrik may be a devoted pastor, but he's also a rigid bully who uses his spiritual authority to compensate for his emotional insecurity. The filmmakers almost let Anna off the hook: aside from her snobbery, she's a warm, loving woman with an independent streak. She sacrifices the pleasures of her cosseted background, becoming an active pastor's wife in Henrik's working-class parish in northern Sweden. But when the spouses clash over their future (Anna wants Henrik to serve as the chaplain of a royal hospital in Stockholm), neither makes the move that might strengthen

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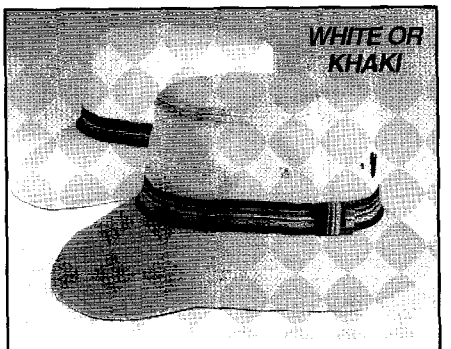
their bond. In a jarring subplot, Anna and Henrik shelter an abused child named Petrus (Elias Ringquist), but their altruism turns sour when Anna confesses that she could never love the boy. Petrus might be Ingmar's surrogate: he brings Bergmanesque chaos into this movie's static universe. The title makes abstract sense, for initially Henrik and Anna are filled with hope and good will. But their best intentions don't last long. A more appropriate title might have been "Forgive Me"—words that are repeated here and throughout Bergman's career. When Anna says that she'll never forgive her mother for driving Henrik away, the older woman asks if Anna will also never forgive life or God. You doubt whether Bergman himself has forgiven any of the above.

SIDNEY LUMET's "A Stranger Among Us," which won no prizes at the 1992 Cannes festival, at least affords us the kick of hearing piping-voiced Melanie Griffith refer to the Cabala as "that Jewish Kama Sutra." Griffith plays Emily Eden, a New York cop who goes undercover in the Hasidic community to investigate a murder; she moves into the household of the Rebbe (Lee Richardson), befriends his adopted daughter (Mia Sara), and comes on to his adopted son (Eric Thal). Apart from deflecting the proposals of her hospitalized boyfriend-partner (Jamey Sheridan) and the propositions of her aggressive replacement partner (John Pankow), she doesn't do much; detective work hardly enters into the script, by Robert J. Avrech ("Body Double"). There aren't even any red herrings—certainly not kosher ones, since the filmmakers share the Hasidim's view of their community as a peaceable kingdom. Abetted by the cinematographer Andrzej Bartkowiak, Lumet relentlessly aestheticizes the world of his fathers, alternating shadowy-golden group shots that echo Rembrandt with window-lit interiors that recall Vermeer. Lumet's vapid strategy is to contrast the soulless, ephemeral Sturm und Drang of the secular sphere with the eternal sublimity of religion. Like the mystery, the social drama is pitifully one-sided. Griffith was more winsome in the recent camp howler "Shining Through"; in that film, she and the writer-director, David Seltzer, were on the same girls'-adventure wavelength. In "A Stranger Among Us," Griffith's artless embodiment of the script's deranged idea of tough-gal gumption—she strides into the Rebbe's chamber cursing and flashing her gams—isn't as amusing as it should be. Eden is a B-picture heroine stuck in an absurdly self-conscious prestige project.

"PRELUDE TO A KISS" doesn't look like a white elephant, but it plods like one. The director, Norman René, and the writer, Craig Lucas, who collaborated on the stage incarnation of the piece, have mounted the movie as if it were still before the footlights. The actors—Meg Ryan and Alec Baldwin as the romantic couple, Sydney Walker as the mysterious Old Man, and even supporting performers like Stanley Tucci (Baldwin's best friend and best man)—are as emotionally weak as they are gesturally emphatic. They're directed to present themselves as the lovable goofball, the befuddled good guy, the gruff but pathos-laden stranger, and so on; there's no behavior here—only stage action, and it thuds on celluloid. The camera ruthlessly reveals the simultaneous thinness and clunkiness of the whimsy at the drama's core. The love story turns on a surprise that occurs before the play's midpoint, and although most people are likely to get what's happening right away, the next half hour bogs down in the type of exposition that takes place in the first half hour of Topper movies. The twist involves a soul-transference that's meant to test the groom's vow to love his bride "all the more" when she shows the ravages of age. (To some, the pivotal gimmick is a rare poetic flight; to me, it's a dramatic mixed metaphor.) The concept's wispiness allows audiences to project their own agendas on the script—the play has been perceived as an imaginative comment on anything from sexual orientation to the durability of love in the epoch of AIDS. Yet Lucas's banal language and fairy-tale sophistries oversimplify rather than enrich matters. The filmmakers want to explore the physical attraction, companionability, and spiritual communion that go into a good marriage, but they fail to put any felt life on the screen. When Alec Baldwin cries, there isn't a wet eye in the house.

—MICHAEL SRAGOW



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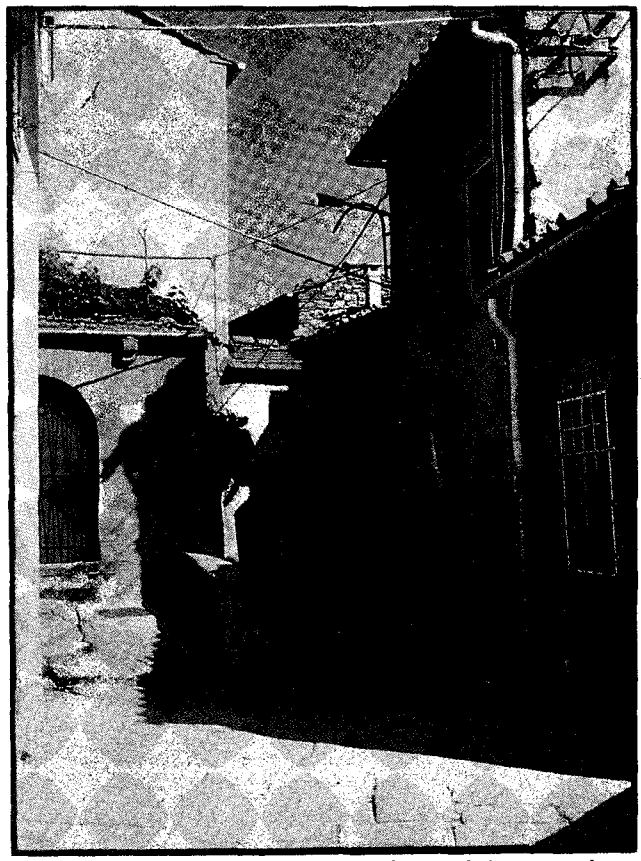
A NEUROLOGIST'S NOTEBOOK

THE LANDSCAPE OF HIS DREAMS



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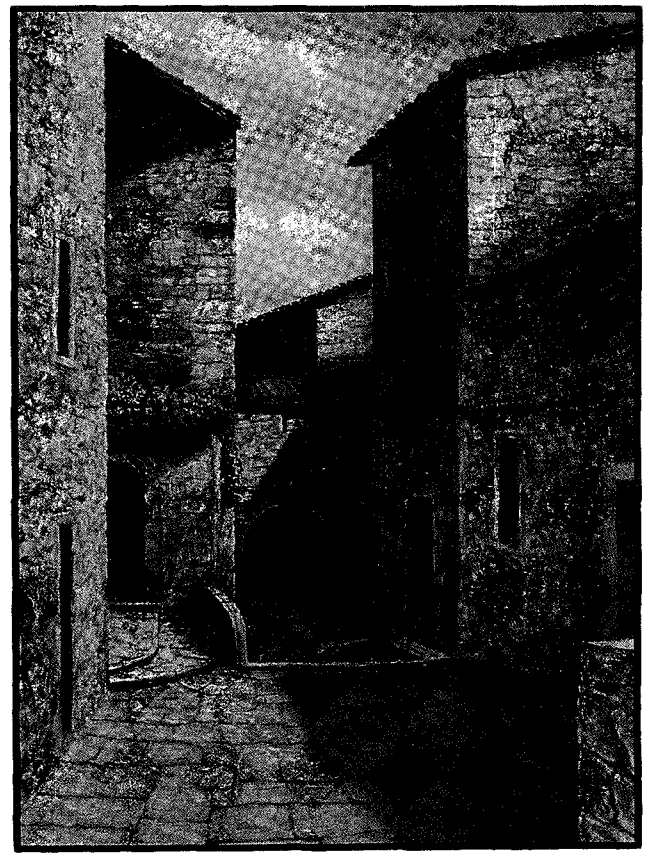

© Franco Magnani

I FIRST met Franco Magnani in the summer of 1988, when the Exploratorium in San Francisco held a symposium and an exhibit on memory. Prominent in the exhibit were fifty paintings and drawings by him—all of Pontito, the little Tuscan hill town where he was born but which he had not seen for thirty years—and, next to them, in astounding apposition, photographs of Pontito taken by the Exploratorium's photographer, Susan Schwartzenberg, from exactly the same viewpoints as Magnani's, where possible. (It was not always possible, for Magnani, in his mind's eye, sometimes visualized and painted Pontito from an imaginary aerial viewpoint fifty or five hundred feet above the ground: Schwartzenberg sometimes had to hoist her camera aloft on a pole, and at one point thought of hiring a helicopter or a balloon.) Magnani was billed as "A Memory Artist," and one had only to glance at the exhibit to see that he was indeed the possessor of a prodigious memory—a memory that could seemingly reproduce with almost photographic accuracy every building, every street, every stone of Pontito, far away, close up, from any possible angle. It was as if Magnani held in his head an infinitely detailed three-dimensional model of his village, which he could turn around and examine, or explore mentally, and then reproduce on canvas with total fidelity.

My first thought when I saw the resemblance between the paintings and the photographs was that here was that rare sensory phenomenon an eidetic artist: an artist able to hold in memory, for hours or days (perhaps for years), an entire scene that has been glimpsed in a flash; the commander (or slave) of a huge native power of imagery and memory. But an eidetic artist would scarcely confine himself to a single theme or subject; on the contrary, he would exploit his memory, or display it, in a huge range of subjects, to show that nothing lay beyond its grasp—whereas Magnani seemingly had no desire to indulge his memory in a wanton fashion but wanted only to concentrate it upon Pontito. This, then, was an exhibit not of "pure" memory but of memory harnessed to a single, overwhelming motive: the recollection of his childhood village. And, I now realized, it was not, or not just, an exercise in memory; it was, equally, an exercise in nostalgia—and not just an exercise but a compulsion, and an art.

A few days later, I spoke to Magnani, and arranged to meet him at his house. He lives in a small community a few miles outside San Francisco. Once I had found his street, I did not need to look for his house number, because his house stood out immediately from its neighbors. In the small front yard was a low stone wall, resembling those in his paintings of Pontito; his car, an aging sedan with vanity plates ("PONTITO"), was parked in the street; the garage had been converted into a studio, and its door was wide open, revealing the artist himself, intently at work.

Magnani was tall and slim, with enormous horn-rimmed glasses that magnified his eyes. He had thick brown hair, carefully parted on one side; a springy stride; and an air of great exuberance and vitality—he was fifty-four but seemed much younger. He

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invited me in and showed me around his home. Every room had paintings on every wall, and every drawer and closet seemed stacked full of paintings—it was less like a house than a museum or archive, totally devoted to the recollection, the reproduction, of Pontito.

As we walked through the house, every painting arrested his attention, aroused a flood of reminiscence: what happened here, what there, and how So-and-So stood there once. "Look at this wall here—that's where the priest, he caught me climbing into the garden behind the church. He chase me all the way down the street. Oh, he always chase all the kids away from there." Each reminiscence triggered others, and these still others, so that within minutes we were engulfed in a flood, without any clear direction or center, but all relating to his early life—to Pontito as he had experienced it as a child. He leaped from one story to another, without any connection that I could discern. This sort of rambling—single-minded and intense but incoherent and unfocussed—seemed characteristic of Magnani: it showed the quality of his obsession, the fact that he thought of Pontito day and night, to the exclusion of all else.

As Magnani talked, I had the impression that his reminiscences were taking him over, that these upsurging memories drove him, dominated him, exerted a huge, irresistible force. He would gesture, he would mime, he would breathe heavily, he would glare—he seemed to be completely transported. Then, with a start, he would "come back," smile a little embarrassedly, and say, "That's how it was."

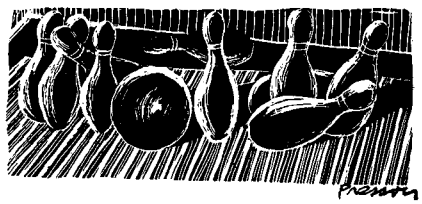
This non-stop verbosity, this reminiscence of concrete episodes, seemed to be in a quite different mode from his painting. When he was alone, he said, the yammer and clatter of memories would die down, and he would get a calm impression of Pontito: a Pontito without people, without incidents, without temporality; a Pontito at peace, suspended in a timeless "once," the "once" of fantasy, myth, and fairy tale.

By midmorning, I had been enthralled again by Magnani's paintings but had had enough of his reminiscences. He had one subject only—could talk of nothing else. What could be more sterile, more boring? Yet out of this obsession he could create a lovely, real, and tranquil art. What was it that served to transform his memories—to remove them from the sphere of the personal, the trivial, the temporal, and bring them into the realm of the universal, the sacred? One encounters boring talkers, reminiscers, by the score, and not one of them will be a true artist, like Magnani. Thus it was not just his vast memory or his obsession or his mania that was crucial in making him an artist but, rather, something much deeper.

Franco Magnani was born in Pontito in 1934. A village of some five hundred souls, it was nestled in the hills of Castelvecchio, in the province of Pistoia, about forty miles west of Florence. Like all Tuscan hill villages, it had an ancient lineage, and still had an abundance of Etruscan tombs, as well as traditional patterns of farming, terracing, and olive and vine growing, going back more than two thousand years. Its stone buildings, its steep, winding streets, traversable only by trim mountain donkeys or human feet, had not changed in centuries, nor had the simple, orderly life of its residents. The village was dominated, at its highest point, by the spire of its ancient church, and Franco's house was next to the church—indeed, as a child, he could almost touch its roof if he leaned far enough out of his bedroom window. Somewhat isolated and inbred, the villagers formed almost a single large family: the Magnanis, the Papis, the Vanuccis, the Tamburis, the Sarpis were all related. The village's greatest eminence was Lazzaro Papi, an eighteenth-century commentator on the French Revolution; a monument to him still stands in the central square.

Isolated, unchanging, traditional, Pontito was a citadel against the flux of change and time. The earth was fertile, the inhabitants industrious; their farms and orchards sustained them without luxury or want. Life was good, and secure, for Franco, for all the villagers, until the outbreak of the war.

But then came horrors and troubles of every kind. Franco's father died in an accident in 1942, and the following year saw the entry of the Nazis, who took over the village and evicted the townspeople. When the villagers came back, many of their houses had been defaced. Life was never the same after this. The town had been despoiled, the fields and orchards had been ruined, and, perhaps most important, the old patterns and mores disturbed. Pontito gathered itself together and tried gallantly to recoup after the war, but it failed to recover fully. It has been in a slow decline ever since. Its orchards and fields, its agrarian economy were never fully restored; it ceased to be self-sufficient economically, and its young men and women had to leave and go elsewhere. The once-thriving village, which had five hundred people before the war, has only seventy people now, all elderly or retired. There are no longer any children, and there are few working adults. The once-vital town is depopulated and dying.



All of Franco's paintings represent Pontito, and his life there, prior to 1943; they are all recollections of his childhood, of the place where he lived and played and grew up, before his father was killed, before the Germans came, before the occupation of the village and the ruination of its fields.

Franco lived in Pontito until he was twelve, in 1946, when he went to school in Lucca. In 1949, he went on to Montepulciano, as an apprentice furniture-maker. He was remarkable for his "photographic" memory even before this (as were his mother and one of his sisters, to a lesser degree): he could remember a page after a single reading, or the lesson in church after a single hearing; he could remember all the inscriptions on the gravestones in the cemetery; he could remember (and add up) long lists of figures at a glance. But it was only in Lucca, away from home for the first time, and markedly homesick, that he started to experience another sort of memory: images that darted suddenly into his mind—images of great personal resonance and intensity, sharp with pleasure or pain. These images were quite different from the "rote" memory that had distinguished him thus far; they were involuntary and sudden, flashlike and imperative—hallucinatory, almost, in their sound, texture, smell, and feel. This new kind of memory was, above all, experiential or autobiographical, for every image came with its proper personal context and affect. Each image was a scene, a

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flashback, from his life. "He painfully missed Pontito," his sister told me. "It was the church, the street, the fields that he would 'see'—but as yet he had no impulse to draw."

Franco returned to Pontito in 1953, after his four years of apprenticeship, but found that the village, already declining, could not support a woodworker. Unable to make a living in Pontito, or follow his trade, he went to Rapallo, where he worked as a cook—though he remained dissatisfied, and dreamed of a different life and faraway places. At the start of 1960—he was now twenty-five—he decided, half impulsively, half deliberately, to quit his job, to see the world, to work as a cook on a cruise ship. And as he was preparing to do this (knowing, perhaps, that he would never return) he composed an autobiography—but he flung it into the water as he was boarding the ship. The need to recollect, to make a picture of his childhood, was clearly very strong in him at this point; he had simply not yet found his medium. So he set sail. He plied to and fro between the Caribbean and Europe, and got to know Haiti, the Antilles, and the Bahamas well—indeed, in 1964 he spent fourteen months in Nassau. During this time, he says, he completely forgot Pontito.

In 1965, when he was thirty-one, he made a momentous decision: he decided he would not go back to Italy, not go back to Pontito; he would settle in America, in San Francisco. The decision was a difficult and troubling one. It threatened a separation, perhaps irrevocable, from all that he held most valuable and dear: his country, his language, his village, his family, the habits and traditions that had bound his people together for hundreds of years. But it promised, or seemed to promise, freedom and perhaps wealth, a new life in a new country, a freedom to be himself, to be independent, such as he had tasted on board ship. (His father, as a young man, had also gone to America, and was in business for a few years, but then languished, and returned to Pontito.)

But with the troubling decision a strange illness occurred, which finally brought him to a sanatorium. It is far from clear what the illness was. There was a crisis of decision, and hope, and fear, but there was also a high fever, weight loss, delirium, perhaps seizures; there was a suggestion of tuberculosis, of a psychosis, or of some neurological condition. It was never really resolved what was going on, and the nature of the illness remains a mystery. What is clear is that at the height of the illness, his brain perhaps stimulated by excitement and fever, Franco started to have, nightly and all night, overwhelmingly vivid dreams. Every night, he dreamed of Pontito, not of his family, not of activities or events, but of the streets, the houses, the masonry, the stones—dreams with the most microscopic, veridical detail, a detail beyond anything he could consciously remember. An intense, strange excitement possessed him in these dreams: a sense that something had just happened, or was just about to happen; a sense of immense, portentous, yet enigmatic significance, accompanied by an insatiable, yearning, bittersweet nostalgia. And when he awoke it seemed to him he was not fully awake, for the dreams were still present, still before his inward eye, painting themselves on the bedclothes and the ceiling and the walls all around him, or standing on the floor, like models, solid, with exquisite detail.

In the hospital, with these dreamlike images forcing themselves upon his consciousness and his will, a new feeling took hold of him—a sense that he was now being "called." Though his powers of imagery had always been great, he had never seen images of such intensity before—images that suspended themselves like apparitions in the air and promised him a "repossession" of Pontito. Now they seemed to say to him, "Paint us. Make us real." Though Franco had scarcely painted or drawn before, he felt he could take a pen or brush and trace the outlines that hovered so clearly in the air before him or projected themselves, as through a camera lucida, on the white walls of his room. Above all, in those first nights of crisis there came to him images of the house where he was born, images impossibly beautiful but with a menacing aspect, too.

Franco's first Pontito painting, indeed, was of his house, a painting that, despite his lack of training, had a striking confidence and clarity of outline, and a strange, dark emotional force. Franco himself was amazed by this painting, by the fact that he could paint, could express himself in this wonderful new way. Even now, a quarter of a century later, he remains amazed. "Fantastic," he says. "Fantastic. How could I do it? And how could I have had the gift and not known it before?" He had occasionally, as a child, imagined himself as an artist, but that was a mere fancy, and he had never done more than play with a pen or a brush—sketch a ship on a postcard, perhaps, or a Caribbean scene. He was also frightened by the power he now felt—a power that had seized him and taken him over but that he could perhaps control and give voice to. And the voice of his paintings, his style, was there from the start, even—or especially—in the first paintings he did. "The first two paintings are quite different from the later ones," his friend Bob Miller said to me. "There's something ominous in them—you can see something deep and significant happening."

THAT Franco did not start thinking obsessively of Pontito—did not have the constant dreams or visions of Pontito—until this time is corroborated by his brother-in-law, who did not see him between 1961 and 1987. "Back in '61, Franco would talk about anything," he told me. "He wasn't obsessed—he was normal. But when I saw him in '87 he seemed possessed. He constantly had visions of Pontito, and he wouldn't talk about anything else."

Miller says, "His paintings started in this crisis period. He was in the hospital, pretty near a mental breakdown, and the paintings seemed to be a sort of solution, or cure. Sometimes he says, 'I have these memories, I have these dreams, I can't function,' but he seems to function pretty well. It's hard to have a normal conversation with him, though—it's 'Pontito, Pontito, Pontito,' all the time. It's as if he had this 3-D construct, this model of Pontito, he can erect—he moves his head, turns around, to 'see' different aspects. He seemed to think this sort of 'seeing' was normal, and it was only in the late seventies, when Gigi, a friend, came back with photos of Pontito, that he realized for the first time how extraordinary it was. . . . Everything is fresh, excited, as if just recalled. It is not a fixed thing, a repertorial thing, at all. He remembers scenes. He acts them out, relives the whole thing. So

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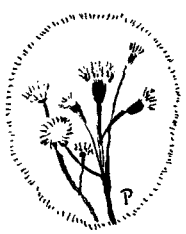
it is a very concrete, particular memory, which organizes itself in stories and scenes—a memory of who said what when." One sometimes feels that there is something theatrical in the paintings, and, to some extent, Franco himself sees them that way.

The mood that had announced itself in dreams at night now deepened and intensified in Franco's mind. He started to get "visions" of Pontito by day—visions emotionally overwhelming but with a minute and three-dimensional quality which he compares to holography. These visions may come at any time—when he is eating or drinking, taking a stroll, showering. There is no doubt of their reality for him. He is, perhaps, talking with you quietly, and suddenly he leans forward, his eyes fixed and staring, in a rapture: an apparition of Pontito is rising before him. "Many of Franco's paintings," writes Michael Pearce (in a fascinating analysis which appeared in *Exploratorium Quarterly* to coincide with the exhibition), "begin with what he describes as a kind of memory flash, where a particular scene will suddenly come into his head. He often feels a great urgency to get the scene down on paper immediately, and has been known to leave a bar in mid-drink in order to begin a sketch. . . . Apparently the 'flash' Franco gets of a scene is not a static, photographic view. . . . He can scan the area and 'see' in several directions. To do this, he must physically reorient his body, turning to the right to envision what would be to the right in the Pontitan scene, to the left to 'see' to that side . . . his eyes looking into the distance as though he can see the stone buildings and archways and streets."



Such apparitions are not only visual. Franco can hear the church bells ("like I was there"); he can feel the churchyard wall; and, above all, he can smell what he sees—the ivy on the church wall, the mingled smells of incense, must, and damp, and, admixed with these, the faint smell of the nut and olive groves that grew around the Pontito of his youth. Sight, sound, touch, smell at such times are almost inseparable for Franco, and what comes to him is like the complex and coenesthetic experience of early childhood—"the instantaneous records of total situation," the psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan once called them.

It seems likely that there is some sudden and profound change in Franco's brain whenever he is "inspired" or "possessed." Certainly when I myself first saw Franco seized by a vision, and noted his staring eyes, his dilated pupils, his raptus of attention, I could not help wondering whether he was having a sort of psychic seizure. Such psychic seizures were first recognized a century ago by the great neurologist John Hughlings Jackson, who stressed the commanding hallucinations, the flow of involuntary "reminiscence," the sense of revelation, and the strange, half-mystical "dreamy state" that could be characteristic of these. Such seizures are associated with epileptic activity in the temporal lobes of the brain.

It is well known that in those who have repeated temporal-lobe seizures there may occur striking and distinctive changes in personality. (The most famous example is Dostoyevski.) These have been very fully described by the neuropsychiatrist David Bear: he notes "emotionality," "grandiosity," "religiosity," "a sense of enhanced personal destiny," "circumstantiality," and, not least, "hypergraphia"—a tendency to keep extensive diaries, to write autobiographies. Or, in short, the Dostoyevski syndrome. I had to wonder whether the illness that Franco had in 1965, with its intensely vivid dreams, its seizurelike hallucinations, its mystical illuminations and transports, was not indeed the inauguration of such a Dostoyevski syndrome.

Hughlings Jackson speaks of the "doubling of consciousness" that tends to occur in such seizures. And this is how it is with Franco: when he is seized by a vision, a waking dream, a reminiscence of Pontito, he is transported—he is, in a sense, there. His reminiscences come suddenly, unannounced, with the force of revelation. Though he has learned over the years to control them to some extent, to invoke them or conjure them up—as indeed all artists learn to do—they remain essentially involuntary. It is precisely this characteristic that Proust holds to be the most valuable: to his mind, voluntary recall is conceptual, conventional, and flat—only *involuntary* recall, erupting or conjured from the depths, can convey the full quality of childhood experience, in all its innocence, wonder, and terror.

The "doubling of consciousness"

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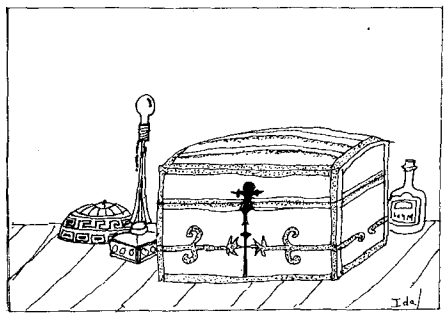
can be confusing for Franco: the vision of Pontito, of the past, competes with the here and now, and on occasion can overwhelm it completely, so that he no longer knows where he is but is lost in a dream or vision of Pontito. And the doubling of consciousness has led to an odd doubling of life. Franco functions, lives, works in present-day San Francisco, but a large part of him—perhaps the larger part—is living in the past, in Pontito. And with this heightening and intensification of living in the past there has come a certain impoverishment and depreciation of the here and now. Franco hardly goes out, hardly travels, goes to no films or theatres; he has few recreations or interests other than his art; he used to have more friends, but has lost many of them by his endless talking of Pontito. He works long hours as a cook in San Francisco's North Beach; he walks around all day, oblivious of the world, in a daze of Pontito; and all his relationships have become attenuated with his obsession—all except that with his wife, Ruth, and it was based largely on her sharing his obsession. Thus it was she who opened a gallery in North Beach and named it the Pontito Gallery, she who obtained "Pontito" license plates for the car. The cost of Franco's nostalgia and art, then, has been his reduction to a sort of half existence in the present.

And yet it would be reductive, absurd to suppose that temporal-lobe epilepsy, seizures of "reminiscence," even if they do constitute the final trigger of Franco's visions, could be the only determinants of his reminiscence and art. The character of the man—his attachment to his mother, his tendency toward idealization and nostalgia; the actual history of his life, including the sudden loss of his childhood paradise and of his father; and, not least, the desire to be known, to achieve, to represent a whole culture—all this, surely, is equally important. I first sensed this complexity talking to Franco and his friends in San Francisco, and I became increasingly aware of it later, when I met other members of his family, and, finally, travelled to Pontito myself.

ONE of Franco's older sisters, Antonietta, now in Holland, remembers when the family returned to the house in Pontito after the Germans had occupied it, and found things defaced and changed. Franco's mother was deeply upset, and so was Franco. This ten-year-old fatherless child said to his mother, "I shall make Pontito again for you, I shall create it again for you." And when he did his first painting—of the house where he was born—he sent it to her; in some sense he was redeeming his promise to reconstruct Pontito for her.

Franco's mother was always seen by him—and by others—as a figure of peculiar power. "She have the power to cure the children—she taught the secret to my sister Caterina," Franco told me. "She also have the power to hurt the body by looking." Such magical thinking was common in Pontito. Franco was always very close to his mother, her favorite, and became much more so with the death of his father, when they seem to have reëntered a sort of pre-Oedipal, almost symbiotic intimacy and closeness. Franco sent copies of all his paintings to her, and when she died, in 1972, he was devastated. With this, he said, "I stopped completely painting." He felt it was the end of him, of his life, of his art. He did not paint for nine months. Then, as he emerged, there came an urgent need to find another woman, to marry, and now he met his future wife, a young Irish-American artist. "When I met Ruth, I wanted to go back to Italy. Ruth, she pull me back. I said, 'No more reason to paint now.' But Ruth, she replace my mother. If not for Ruth, I never have painted no more."

Franco had a perpetual fantasy of going back to Pontito; he constantly talked about "a reunion" and "going home," and sometimes talked as if his mother were still mysteriously alive, waiting for him in their home, waiting for his return. Yet though he had many opportunities to go back, he managed to sabotage them all. "There is something preventing his going back to Pontito," Bob Miller said. "Some force, some fear—I don't know what it is." Franco was somewhat shocked when he saw photographs of Pontito in the late seventies—the loss of the fields and orchards, the overgrowth appalled him—and he could hardly bear to look at the photographs that Susan Schwartzenberg took in 1987. None of this was his Pontito, the Pontito of his youth, the Pontito he had hallucinated and dreamed about and painted for twenty-five years.



There was an irony and a paradox here: Franco thought of Pontito constantly, saw it in fantasy, depicted it, as infinitely desirable—and yet he had a profound reluctance to return. But it is precisely such a paradox that lies at the heart of nostalgia—for nostalgia is about a fantasy that never takes place, one that maintains itself by not being fulfilled. And yet such fantasies are not just idle daydreams or fancies; they press toward some sort of fulfillment, but an indirect one—the fulfillment of art. These, at least, are the terms that D. Geahchan, the French psychoanalyst, has used. With reference in particular to the greatest of nostalgics, Proust, the psychoanalyst David Werman speaks of an "aesthetic crystallization of nostalgia"—nostalgia raised to the level of art and myth.

There is no doubt that Franco is at once the victim and the possessor of an imagery whose power is difficult for us to conceive. He is not at liberty to misremember, nor is he at liberty to stop remembering. There beats down on him, night and day, whether he likes it or not, a reminiscence of almost intolerable power and exactness. "No one . . . has felt the heat and pressure of a reality as indefatigable as that which day and night converged upon the hapless Ireneo," Borges writes in a sketch entitled "Funes the Memorious." Such an intolerably vivid reality converges upon Franco, too.

But one is not born with a disposition to recollect; this comes only with changes and separations in life—separations from people, from places, from events and situations, especially if they have been of great significance, have been deeply hated or loved. It is, thus, discontinuities, the great discontinuities in life, that we seek to bridge, or reconcile, or integrate, by recollection, and, beyond this, by myth and art. Discontinuity and nostalgia are most profound if, in growing up, we leave or lose the place where we were born and spent our childhood, if we become

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expatriates or exiles, if the place, or the life, we were brought up in is changed beyond recognition or destroyed. All of us, finally, are exiles from the past. But this is particularly true for Franco, who feels himself the sole survivor and rememberer of a world forever past.

Whatever Franco's personal gifts and pathologies—his memory, his gift for painting, his seizures (perhaps), his nostalgia—he is also moved, and has been moved throughout, by a feeling and motive that transcend the personal; by the cultural need to remember the past, to preserve its meaning, or give it new meaning, in a world that has forgotten it. In brief, we see in Franco's work the art of the exile. Much art—much mythology, indeed—stems from exile. Exile (from the Garden, from Zion) is a central myth in the Bible, a central myth in every religion. Exile, of course—and perhaps, though hugely transformed, a sort of nostalgia—is a central dynamic in Joyce's life and work. He left Dublin, never to return, as a very young man, but the image of Dublin haunts everything he wrote: first as the literal background of "Stephen Hero," "Dubliners," and "Exiles," and then as the increasingly mythologized and universalized backdrop of "Ulysses" and "Finnegans Wake." Joyce's memory of Dublin was prodigious, and was continually amplified and complemented by meticulous research; but it was the Dublin of his youth that inspired him—he had little interest in its later development. And so, in a more modest way, it is with Franco: Pontito is the background of all his thoughts, from the most personal, quotidian recollections to allegorical visions of Pontito as the center of a cosmic struggle between the eternal forces of good and evil.

IN March of 1989, I went to Pontito, to see the village for myself and to talk to some of Franco's relatives there. I found the village itself, compared with the paintings, at once extraordinarily similar and totally different. There is an almost photographic fidelity, an amazing microscopic power of reproduction, in the way Franco recollects, thirty years later, the details of Pontito. At the same time, it is clear that he has transformed Pontito, for in reality it is much smaller—the streets are narrower, the houses more irregular, the church tower shorter and more squat—than what one sees in his paintings. There are many reasons for this, one of which is that Franco paints what he saw with a child's eye, and to a child everything is taller and more spacious. But, more important, it was obvious as soon as I saw Pontito that his paintings are not facsimiles or reproductions but reconstructions, and that the essential quality of his memory is not reproductive but reconstructive.

This reconstruction is paramount in the most personal pictures, such as the view from his bedroom window. Here Franco brings into an intensely personal and aesthetic unity a range of buildings that cannot be seen (or photographed) all at once, but which he has observed, lovingly, at different times. He has here constructed an ideal view, which has the truth of art and transcends factuality. Such a painting shows that whatever the photographic or eidetic power Franco brings to it, it always has a subjectivity, an intensely personal cast as well. Ernest Schachtel, speaking as a psychoanalyst, discusses this in relation to childhood memories:

> Memory as a function of the living personality can be understood only as a capacity for the organization and reconstruction of past experiences and impressions in the service of present needs, fears, and interests. . . . Just as there is no such thing as impersonal perception and impersonal experience, there is also no impersonal memory.

This, indeed, is the distinction Kierkegaard makes, writing, in "Stages on Life's Way":

> Memory is merely a minimal condition. By means of memory the experience presents itself to receive the consecration of recollection. . . . For recollection is ideality . . . it involves effort and responsibility, which the indifferent act of memory does not involve. . . . Hence it is an art to recollect.

Franco's Pontito is minutely accurate, in the tiniest details, and yet it is also serene and idyllic: a transforming, transfiguring vision suffuses it. There is a great stillness in it, a sense of peace, not least because it is usually devoid of people. His Pontito is depopulated, its buildings and streets are empty; the bustling, transitory people have been removed. There is something of a desolate—a post-nuclear—quality here. What has happened, one wants to ask, to all the people? But there is also a deeper, more spiritual stillness. One cannot help feeling that something is strange here, that what is being recalled is not the actuality of childhood, as with Proust, but a deny-

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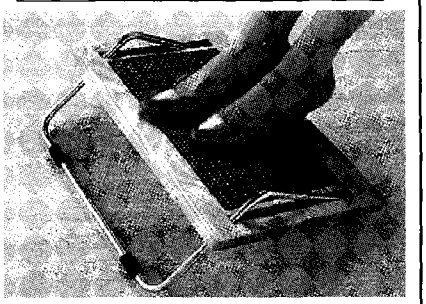

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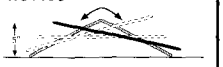

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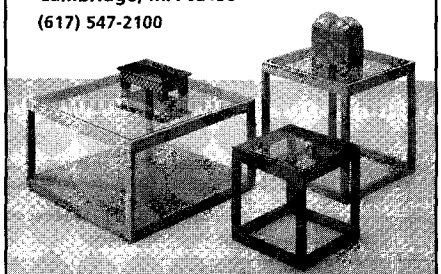

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ing and transfiguring vision of childhood, with the place, Pontito, taking the place of the people—the parents, the living people—who must have been so important to the child. Franco is not unaware of this, and will in some moods talk of the reality of childhood as he knew it—its complexities, its conflicts, its griefs, and its pains. But all this is edited out in his art, where a paradisiacal simplicity prevails. One finds the belief in a happy childhood "even in people who have undergone cruel experiences as children," Schachtel writes. "The myth of happy childhood takes the place of the lost memory of the actual . . . experience."

And it is at this point that Franco's personal, nostalgic feelings become cultural, transcendent ones. Pontito, he feels, is special in God's eyes, and must be preserved from destruction and corruption. It is special, too, in embodying a precious culture—a mode of building, a mode of living, that has almost vanished from the earth. He sees his mission as one of preservation: to preserve Pontito exactly as it was, above and beyond all contingencies and eventualities. That this is a central dynamic, or the central dynamic, is shown by a series of remarkable apocalyptic or "science fiction" paintings, which he seems to do in periods of mental stress or distress. In these, the earth is menaced by another planet or a comet, by imminent or actual destruction, but Pontito survives: Franco shows the old church, or a garden, all green and gold, radiant, transfigured, in a beam of sunlight, miraculously surviving the all-encompassing destruction. These apocalyptic paintings have titles like "Pontito Preserved for Eternity in Infinite Space."

"I don't feel that I deserve the credit for these paintings," Franco wrote me in a letter. "I did them for Pontito. . . . I want the whole world to know how fantastic and beautiful it is. In this way maybe it won't die, although it is dying. Maybe my paintings will at least keep its memory alive."

Franco gets up early each morning and knows what he has to do. He has his task, his mission: to recollect—to consecrate the memory of Pontito. His visions, when they come, are full of emotion and excitement—no less so than they were when they first came to him, twenty-five years ago. And the activity of painting—of walking again, in recollection, through the so loved paths and streets, and being able to articulate this, in so masterly a fashion, with such richness and detail—gives him a sense of identity and accomplishment, by giving his visions a controlled and artistic form.

UP to early 1989, I had seen Franco and visited him at his house in San Francisco several times; I had spoken with his friends there; I had met two of his sisters in Holland; and, above all, I had visited Pontito, which excited and teased Franco, for he was thinking now, more than at any time in the past twenty years, of visiting Pontito himself. His life had had, until now, a strange sort of stability, with living, eating, functioning—somewhat absent-mindedly—in the present, but with his mind and art constantly fixed on the past. In this he had been greatly aided by Ruth, who, though herself an artist, had identified herself in the deepest way with Franco's Pontitan relationship and art, and did all she could to take care of the mundane necessities of life and to give him the protection and insulation he needed, to dwell and work uninterrupted, in his nostalgic art. But in 1987, tragically, she became sick, and, after a painful fight with cancer, she died, just three months before Franco's Exploratorium exhibit. This was his first big show, and, along with his wife's death, it stirred feelings that he could no longer go on as he had in the past—that something new must happen, that new decisions must be made. He sounded these themes in a letter he wrote me a month later:

> Very shortly I may be moving. Probably to San Francisco, but maybe back to Italy for good. . . . My situation since my wife died has been difficult for me. I'm not sure what I should do. . . . I must sell my house, look for a new place and job in San Francisco, or in the future go back to Pontito. So that will be the end of the Pontito memory—but not the end of my life! I'll start a new memory.

I was struck by the way in which he equated a return to Pontito with the end of his singular reminiscences and art. One saw now why he had sabotaged all previous opportunities to go there. Could the fairy tale, the myth, survive reality?

In March of 1989, I spoke of Franco and his art at a conference in Florence. Invitations started to pour in on Franco—to give interviews, to send slides, to allow an exhibit, and, above all, to return to Pontito. Pescia,

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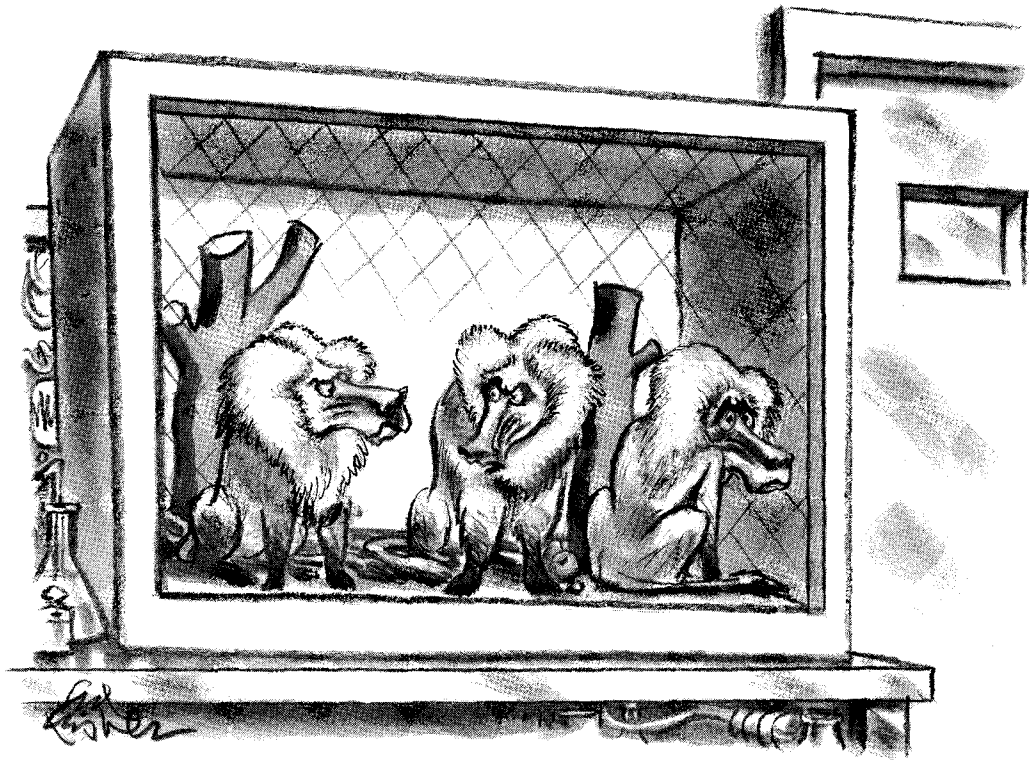
the nearest big town to Pontito, organized an exhibit of his paintings, to be held in September, 1990. His long-standing inner conflict was magnified by this outside notice; a state of excitement and ambivalence and agitation grew. Finally, that summer, he decided to go.

He had envisaged walking from Pescia—walking up the winding mountain road to Pontito, carrying on his back a wooden cross he had made, which he would place in the old church at Pontito. He would be alone, utterly alone, in this consecrated walk. He would stop at a spring, an ancient spring of fresh water, just outside Pontito, and put his face in the gushing waters. Perhaps after drinking the waters, he thought, he would lie down and die. Or perhaps, purified, born again, he would reënter Pontito. No one would recognize him, the grizzled stranger from afar, until an old dog—the old dog he had known as a child, now so old it could scarcely move (the dog, indeed, would have to be the same age as Franco himself)—until his old dog, recognizing him, would feebly lick him and then, its waiting over, would wag its tail and die. It was singular to hear this elaborate fantasy from Franco, this fantasy with elements of Sophocles and Homer no less than the New Testament, for he had never read, never heard of, Sophocles or Homer.

In the event, his return was nothing like this.

He had phoned me in a panic the evening before his flight. Innumerable thoughts and desires and fears were colliding inside him: Should he go, or shouldn't he? He kept changing his mind. Since his art was based on fantasy and nostalgia, he was terrified that he would lose it if he returned to Pontito. I listened carefully, like an analyst, offering no suggestions. "You have to decide," I said, finally. He took the red-eye flight later that evening.

He had hoped that, first, he might meet the Pope, and have his cross blessed before he walked with it to Pontito. But the Pope was away, in Africa. Nor was the Via Dolorosa walk to Pontito possible. The mayor of Pescia and other officials were at this moment, he was told, awaiting him in Pontito, and he was whisked off there, at high speed, in a car.



"He's got a bum liver, lucky devil!"

• •

The ceremony over, Franco took off by himself, going to his boyhood home. His first impression: "Oh my God, it was so small I had to crouch to look through my window. I see changes outside—but to me is no change." As he walked around the town, it seemed uncannily quiet, deserted, "like everybody is left, like the town is mine." He savored, for a little, this sense that it was his, and then got a sense of grievous loss: "I missed the chickens, the donkey shoes. Like a dream. Everybody left. You used to hear a lot of noise—the children coming up, the women, the donkey shoes. All gone." No one greeted him, no one recognized him, no one was to be seen on the streets during this first walk. He saw no curtains in the windows and no laundry hanging, heard no sounds of life coming from the empty, shuttered houses. He encountered only half-feral cats slinking in the alleys. The feeling grew on him that Pontito was indeed dead, and he himself a revenant returning to a ghost town.

He wandered out beyond the houses, into the areas that used to be lush with well-tended fields and orchards. Now everywhere the ground was cracked and dry; there was neglect, and a huge overgrowth of parasites and weeds. Now, it seemed to him, not only Pontito but the whole enterprise of civilization was in ruins. He thought of his own apocalyptic visions: "Someday it will be polluted, overgrown. There will be nuclear war. So I will put it in Space, to be preserved for Eternity."

But then, as the sun rose, the sheer beauty of the scene made him catch his breath: "I can't believe it, it's so beautiful." There, rising up tier by tier on the mountain, was Pontito, *his* Pontito, all green and gold, the church tower at its crest glinting now in the early morning sun—*his* church, completely unchanged. "I went up in the tower. I touched the stones. Its age to me is like a thousand years. It's all different colors—the copper, the green." Touching the stones, stroking them, caressing them, Franco grounded himself, started to feel again that Pontito was real. Stones have always played a crucial role in his paintings; they are portrayed with the utmost accuracy—every shade, every color, every convexity or crack lovingly dwelt on and delineated. There is an extraordinary tactile or kinesthetic quality in Franco's stones. Now, as he touched them, the

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actuality of "coming home" started to return, and for the first time during his visit Franco started to rejoice. The stones, at least, had not changed. Nor had the church, or the buildings, or the streets. Their feel, at least, was still what it had been. And now the villagers, many of them relatives, came out of their houses, excitedly greeting him, bombarding him with questions. Everyone was proud of him: "We've seen your paintings, we've been hearing about you—you're coming back to us now?" And now he started to feel like the prodigal son. This, he said later, was a high point of his trip: "As a young child in Pontito, I thought, One day I'm going to grow up. Do something, be somebody, for my *madre*. Show the people in Pontito. After my father died, I had no shoes, all broke. I used to feel shame. We were despised."

His childhood fantasy was coming true: Franco had done something, was somebody, and now people—not just people in America or Italy but his own people, the Pontitans—loved and admired him. A tender feeling for the people—"my people"—seized him. They could not remember the past as he did—their memories lacked the power of his, or had been updated, effacing the past. This was evident whenever he spoke to them. He, then, would be their archive, their memory: "I bring back the memory to these people." And he later said to the mayor, "I'm going to build a gallery, a little museum, something to bring the people back to the town."

On the surface, returning to Pontito was not as intense an experience as he had expected—there had been no mystical revelations, no ecstasies on the heights—but neither had he dropped dead from poisoned waters, or had a heart attack, as he had also more than half expected. It was when he left that he really felt the impact.

Back in San Francisco, he found himself in a crisis. First, there was an overwhelming sensory confusion: he seemed to see two pictures of Pontito—two "newsreels," as he put it—running simultaneously in his head, with the more recent, the updated, tending to blot out the older. He could do nothing to stop this perceptual conflict, and when he tried to paint Pontito he found that he no longer knew what to do: "I get confused, I see these two pictures at once," he told me. "I thought I would paint Pontito as it was, but I 'see' it as it is now. I thought I would go crazy. What could I do? Maybe I could never paint Pontito again. I got scared. My God, now—start all over again? It took me ten days to come back."

It took ten days for the hallucinatorily vivid pictures of the new Pontito to die down, to stop competing with the old Pontito—ten days for the merely sensory conflict to resolve—and, as for his emotions, they were so confused that he hardly dared think about them. At this point, almost desperate, he said, "I wish I never went back. I work best with my fantasy. I can't work now." It was a month before he started to draw Pontito again. These new drawings and paintings, just a few inches square, took on an unusually tender and intimate quality: corners, nooks where a boy might sit, nooks where he had sat and dreamed as a child. These little scenes, though they did not contain human figures, had an intensely human feel, as if their occupants had just left or were just about to arrive—very different from the idealized yet deserted scenes he had usually painted.

Thinking over the experience, Franco felt that it had been both enjoyable and exhausting, but compromised, at a deeper level, in his three weeks there, because he had had no time to himself—he had been followed and interviewed every day in Pontito, and had had no time to sketch or think. He felt a need to go back a second time, to confront the deeper issues, to spend time alone in Pontito.

IN March, 1991, there was a second exhibit of Franco's paintings in Italy—this one in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Florence—and I accompanied Franco to the exhibit. He was abashed by the splendid surroundings, by seeing his paintings in vast, palatial rooms. "I feel like an intruder," he said. "They do not belong." He and his paintings, he feels, are rooted in the hilly Tuscan countryside; he feels uncomfortable in the cosmopolitan grandeur of Florence.

The next morning, Franco and I are off to Pontito; for the first time, we will see his town together. We pass the Duomo and the Baptistry in the center of Florence, pass the old children's hospital, the Innocenti, driving through the miraculously preserved old city, unspoiled and deserted now, near dawn on a Sunday. Franco, beside me, is rapt, absorbed in his thoughts.

We pass the road for Pistoia and head toward Montecatini, the slopes on either side of us dotted with old hill towns. "There is at the back of every artist's mind something like a pattern or a type of architecture," G. K. Chesterton wrote. "It is a thing like the landscape of his dreams; the sort of world he would wish to make or in which he would wish to wander; the strange flora and fauna of his own secret planet." For Auden, this landscape was limestone and lead mines; for Franco, it is this old, gnarled, unchanging Tuscan landscape.

A sign warning motorists of snow prompts me to ask Franco whether there was ever snow in Pontito, or whether he had ever painted a snow-whitened Pontito. Yes, there was snow, he says, and he once started a snowscape, but almost all his paintings are of Pontito *in primavera*, in spring.

As we reach Pescia, at the bottom of the mountain, below Pontito, Franco recognizes people and places: the shop where he used to buy paints, forty years ago; a subterranean bar. Little has changed in this slow-paced town. He recognizes the mailman from the nineteen-forties: they throw their arms around each other in the street. Everyone is welcoming, there are smiles everywhere for the prodigal son come home once more. We move on to the city hall, where Franco was given the honors of the city during his first visit. A prophet *is* honored now in his own land. This pleases him, this local fame; he belongs here, as he does not belong in Florence.

From Pescia the road is narrow and steep. We wind up in second gear after nearly ditching ourselves on the first turn, past Pietrabuona, a town named after its fine stone, with its church and oldest buildings perched on its highest hill. We pass its terraced hills, softly lit, with gnarled olive trees and vines upon them; these terraces are ancient, dating from Etruscan times. We wind around past many small villages—Castelvecchio, Stiappa, San Quirico.

Finally, we round another bend in the road and catch our first sight of Pontito. "My God, look at it!" Franco exclaims, sotto voce. "Jesus Christ! I

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can see my home. No, I can't. . . . This overgrowth is bad, parasites everywhere. Used to be cherry, pear, fruit trees. Chestnuts, grains, corn, lentils." He tells me how, as a lanky, long-legged youth, he used to stride from one village to another. As we approach Pontito, Franco's eyes grow moist. He stares intensely, and murmurs to himself as he takes everything in. "This is the bridge, the stream, where we did the washing. Down the path, here, the women would walk with baskets on their heads."

We stop the car, and Franco leaps out, seeing and remembering more details all the time. And, along with this pure topographic memory, there is also a cultural one. He describes how the villagers would take hemp and immerse it in the stream for a year, anchored by rocks, and then take it out to be dried and woven into fabric for sheets and towels, and for sacks for chestnuts: a whole local industry, a tradition, now nearly forgotten, except by Franco. Suddenly, indignant at new growth obscuring the path, he tears it out in giant armfuls. Angry at some new building, he tells me in detail exactly how it used to be: "There was a big rock there, the water ran here." There is no doubt that every stone, every inch, is engraved in his memory.

"*Come sta?*" Climbing up the steep cobbled street, Franco greets a stout middle-aged man in a green coat. ("His father gave us candies.") Franco has a bardic memory, but the trivial and the momentous, the personal and the mythic, are indiscriminately mixed. He stops at the house where his mother was born.

"Sabatoni!"

"Franco!" An old man emerges. ("It's my uncle.") "You've been in America. What brings you back? I heard there was a show in Florence." The old man mentions the drying of chestnuts. He forgets the details, but Franco does not. The old man points out that the four houses next to his, so full of life once, are now empty. "When I am dead, it will be empty here, too."

We visit Franco's sister Caterina. She and her husband have retired to Pontito, and Franco is distressed to see her looking older than he remembers. Caterina feeds us a magnificent Tuscan lunch—cheese, bread, olives, wine, tomatoes preserved from her garden—and then Franco takes me off to look at the church. It is a beautiful spot, atop the hill and overlooking the rest of the village. In the cemetery, Franco points out the graves of his mother, his father, this relative and that. "There are more people in the graveyard than in the town," he says softly. Franco plans to stay in Pontito for three more weeks, to do some quiet sketching. He says, "I'm going to put my roots back here." But, as I leave, my final image is of Franco standing by himself in the cemetery, gazing over the depopulated town, alone.

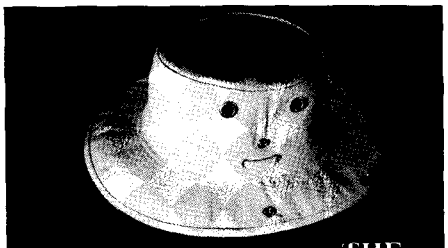
FRANCO'S three weeks in Pontito seemed to recharge him; at least, he has been incessantly active since his return. His garage-studio is crackling with life. There are pictures everywhere, old and new—the new ones based on sketches he did in March, and the old ones, started in '87 but left unfinished with Ruth's death, now being completed in a burst of new decision and energy.

But what is the nature of this new creative energy? What is the meaning of Pontito for Franco now? Does his passionate, ceaseless, and now renewed dwelling upon it, *in* it, serve to split his memory, his consciousness, his life, in two? Does it represent a radical discontinuity within him, a failure to bring past and present together, a fundamental failure in integration? Or an attempt, reinforced now by the reality, to achieve integration?

Goethe, who liked to see himself as the embodiment of psychic integration and health, was deeply against "the morbid," as he saw it, in life or art. And he felt that a special morbidity lay in nostalgia, in cherishing memory or longing for the past. Thus, at a party, when someone injudiciously proposed a toast to Memory, he became furious, and lambasted the toaster:

> I do not recognize memory in the sense in which you mean it. Whatever we encounter that is great, beautiful, significant, need not be remembered from outside, need not be hunted up and laid hold of, as it were. Rather, from the beginning, it must be woven into the fabric of our inmost self, must become one with it, create a new and better self in us and thus live and become a productive force in our lives. There is no past that one is allowed to long for. There is only the eternally new, growing from the enlarged elements of the past; and genuine longing always must be productive, must create something new and better.

But who is Goethe, or anyone, to dictate what is right, or productive, for others? Perhaps here one must think,



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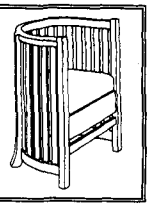

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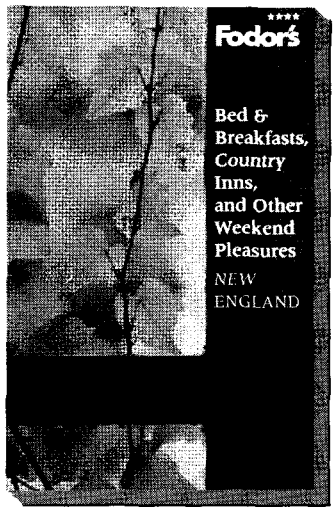

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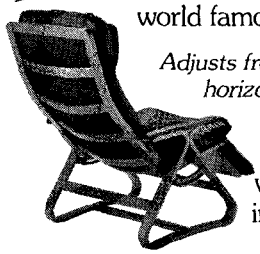

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in William James's terms, of the "once-born" and the "twice-born": those in whose lives and minds there has been a sort of harmony and unity from the start; and those whose lives have been broken across and who achieve harmony and unity (if they achieve it at all) only much later, by an extraordinary act of self-integration and transformation—an act depending on an intense, difficult, but healing recollection, which serves (in Freud's word) to "retranscribe" memory, to replace fantasy memories with genuine ones. Such a task was laid on Proust, who spent much of his adult life hunting down and seizing crucial early memories that had been forgotten, or repressed, or falsified—memories that had *not* been interwoven from the start. Proust did this, no doubt, partly for the sake of his art, but equally to fill a personal need: to decipher the meaning of his own past and life, to bring all together into an intelligible whole. And such a task has been laid on Franco, who is not only (as we all are) an exile from childhood but, in the most literal sense, an exile from a vanished world and way of life.

The new paintings: Are they really new? This is difficult to say, for though Franco has recently sketched and painted new scenes—changing the vegetation, inserting new fences or gates—the paintings look much the same, they feel the same, as his memory paintings. Clearly, there is no essential change—at least, not at this point. He may incorporate elements of the new here and there, but they are incorporated into a picture essentially old.

Thus Franco's project, in a fundamental sense, has not changed: it is still the preservation and idealization of Pontito. The actuality of Pontito, as it exists now, did not (one sees) have a destructive effect on the project. Indeed, if the actual Pontito, as he has now seen it, is sad and dying, menaced by overgrowth and neglect, these changes only add to the urgent need for its preservation—not only in art but in reality, too.

Still, Franco feels that he must ration his exposure; he did not return when invited last August, even though there was an exhibit of his paintings filling the streets. Other artists are coming to Pontito now, but they see it as just another Tuscan hill town; it has no special meaning for them. For Franco, by contrast, it is autobiography incarnate, the place that must be remembered, constantly, accurately, minutely, obsessively, because it contains "the sacred and precious memories of childhood," as Dostoyevski calls them—because for him it is the very key, the very door, into the lost world of childhood. And beyond this, in his more grandiose imaginings, it is fraught, ever more fraught, with cosmic significance. Thus, in one recent allegorical picture he put a satellite dish on the church: a dish aimed at the stars—and at God.

When I visited Franco last summer, I saw a pair of sneakers hanging from the rafters of his garage, with an elaborately calligraphed notice tied to them, saying, in Italian, "With these shoes, after 34 years, I first set foot in what had been the Promised Land." Now that he had set foot in it, it had lost some of its glamour, its promise. "Sometimes I wish I never went back," he said as he saw me looking at the shoes. "Fantasy, memory, that is the most beautiful." And then he added, musingly, "Art is like dreaming."

One of Franco's fantasies is shattered—the thought that he can actually return to Pontito, actually regain his lost childhood, the lost past. He knows now that Pontito as it once was no longer exists; that few people remember it, and their memories are fading. He knows that it is up to him, with his memory and his gifts, to preserve what would otherwise be lost. He felt this devastatingly as he stood in the cemetery, gazing down at the almost lifeless town. But now he feels his creative force renewed. He speaks confidently of "another twenty years of work": he is confident that he can reclaim in art what is irredeemably lost in reality.

—Oliver Sacks

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THE SKY LINE

Pure Wright

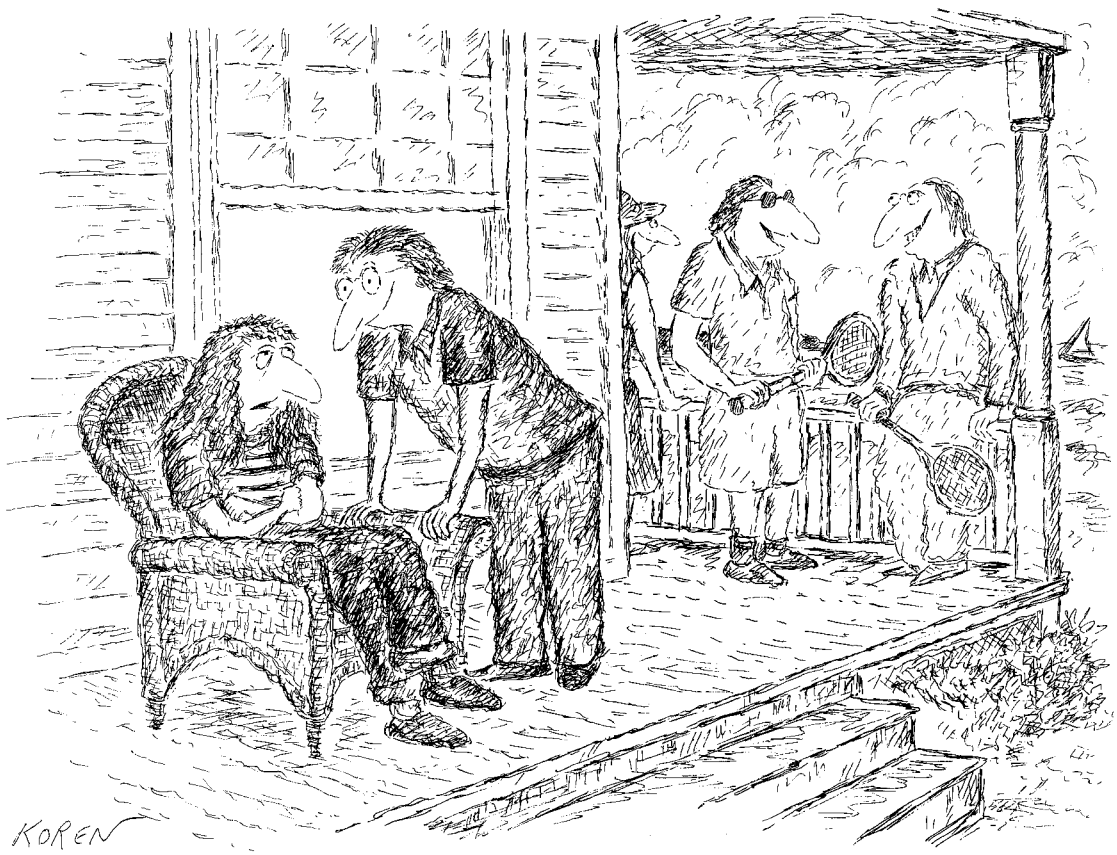
SUPERBLY restored inside and out, and with a new wing that increases its exhibition space from just over thirty thousand square feet to just over fifty thousand, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, closed since the spring of 1990, held a gala reopening three weeks ago. Simultaneously, the museum opened an extension occupying some sixty-four thousand square feet in a late-nineteenth-century loft building at 575 Broadway, in the heart of SoHo. The shared timing of these events was plainly intended to symbolize that the SoHo Guggenheim, though physically separate from the "old" museum uptown, is an integral part of a single institution, whose various functions are being efficiently apportioned between the two locations. Heightening this efficiency is still another extension of the Guggenheim domain: a recently renovated building on the West Side that provides space for storage and for what the museum defines as its technical services—conservation, photography, and the like.

If the Metropolitan is indisputably a large museum and the Whitney a small one, the Guggenheim has suddenly and unexpectedly emerged as what I will risk calling a *large* small museum. It has entered that category not only because of its remarkable increase in size (a total of just under a hundred thousand square feet of space for all purposes has been more than doubled) but also because of what sheer size makes possible: a much multiplied ambition in respect to the things that a museum is capable of accomplishing. A change in scale invites—perhaps imposes—a change in aims, and anyone entering the uptown building will feel at once a difference between the Guggenheim we have known and the Guggenheim we will come to know. It is a difference such as we sometimes encounter in an old friend who has attained a prominent position in the world: we detect in him certain intricate alterations that make him appear larger than life, and to our accustomed affection we willingly add a measure of awe.

Since its opening, in 1959, the Guggenheim has been generally regarded as one of the four or five greatest works to have come from the hand of Frank Lloyd Wright. At the same time, it has been no less generally regarded as one of the most vexatious works ever created by an architect. Wright, who rejoiced equally to be praised and damned, so long as it was in the superlative, would no doubt prefer me to suppress my cautious "one of" and assert that the Guggenheim is *the* most vexatious building in history. With his usual seductive bravado, he would then proceed to claim that its quintessential vexatiousness was entirely the fault of James Johnson Sweeney, who was the director of the Guggenheim during much of the time it was under design and construction, and that the building would have caused no trouble whatever if Wright—by his own reckoning the most gifted architect who ever lived—had been allowed to have his way in all things.

As a friend of both Wright and Sweeney, I used to listen to both sides of their acrimonious running argument (prudently keeping silent when, on occasion, I would meet with one and soon afterward with the other). As adversaries, they were exceptionally well matched—in intelligence, in hot temper, and in a command of abusive language. Their argument was interrupted only by Wright's unlooked-for death, a few months before the museum opened. (He was almost ninety-two, but still in excellent fighting trim; his death is thought to have been a consequence of ill-advised medical treatment.) The vehemence of Wright and Sweeney obscured the degree to which theirs was a classic debate—one that has been going on without resolution for almost as long as architecture has been identified as a professional activity. Can a structure that succeeds as a work of art and yet fails to fulfill the function for which it was designed be called a successful work of architecture, much less an architectural masterpiece?

From the moment Wright set the



"Sorry, Roy, I don't think any man can help."

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first sketch of a spiralling Guggenheim down on paper, the question arose of how well it would work as a museum. It was to be Wright's first museum, and he was notorious for the arbitrary fashion in which he brushed aside the actual needs of a client in favor of his own intuitive and sometimes outrageous appraisals of those needs. He would design a theatre (as he did for Aline Barnsdall) that made no provision for lighting, curtain, or scenery; he would design a glass-walled laboratory tower (as he did for the Johnson Wax Company) so recklessly at the mercy of the sun that it threatened to parboil its occupants and had to be abandoned within a few years of its construction; and, for his mile-high skyscraper project in Chicago, he designed a garage capable of holding fifteen thousand cars, without ever considering how long it would take to empty a garage of fifteen thousand cars at the peak of a Chicago rush hour.

Sure enough, Wright, in his design for the Guggenheim, paid little attention to such conventional museological necessities as storage space, areas for conservation, and offices for the curatorial and executive staff. Worse, he had no liking for the collection of nonobjective art (by, among others, Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Moholy-Nagy) that Hilla Rebay, the German-born baroness, artist, and first director of the museum, had assembled on behalf of Solomon Guggenheim and had commissioned Wright to house. Wright's favorite works of art were Japanese wood-block prints, of which, in the course of his visits to Japan, he had collected many thousands. (On several occasions, selling prints to fellow-collectors helped to stave off the financial ruin that Wright courted as assiduously as other men court wealth.) Early in his career, he designed a number of slant-topped wooden stands for the viewing of his prints; following this precedent, he designed slanted walls upon which to exhibit the Guggenheim's paintings. As for the quarter-mile-long spiralling ramp from which visitors to the museum would be obliged to view the collection, its floor was designed to slope in two directions at once. Visitors ascending or descending the ramp of the immense, skylit rotunda tended to drift protectively sidewise, in the direction of the stumpy parapet that Wright had designed to keep them from pitching headlong into the void.

The man Protagoras had in mind when he said "Man is the measure of all things" was, in Wright's view, Wright himself. He was short, and it followed that the universal measure must be short as well. Wright felt content with a parapet that, as it leaned outward into the rotunda, reached up almost to his waist; visitors of average—or above-average—height have always found it ominously low. Slanted walls and slanted parapet aside, the ramp presents a psychological problem. Are we ever fully at ease when we have to accommodate our posture to a sloping surface? I think not. On the contrary, we like to plant our feet firmly on the level even when we are engaged in the most commonplace activities. That being the case, how much greater our unease is bound to be when the activity we are undertaking is one that calls for a high degree of concentration, like the contemplation of works of art!

Wright wasn't in the least concerned with such matters. The ramp as an architectural form had obsessed him for decades; he had sought to employ it in half a dozen projects—scenic lookouts, garages, salesrooms, and the like—and it was only by chance that a museum offered him at last an opportunity to exploit its architectural possibilities. At an early stage of the Guggenheim design, Wright asked the New York architect F. Burrall Hoffman, Jr., to help him pilot the design through the local bureaucratic maze. Hoffman refused the task, and another New York architect, Arthur Holden (currently living in retirement in Connecticut, at the age of a hundred and one), consented to perform it. Hoffman recalled long afterward that at the time of their meeting Wright spoke of having visitors to the museum ride down the ramp in wheeled vehicles. Presumably, these visitors would be granted glimpses of the pictures on display as they glided past them, at whatever speed the director of the museum happened to deem appropriate. (Holden calls this proposal "a damn-fool notion" that Wright never mentioned to him.)

In fairness to Wright, I ought to note that the program for the museum underwent constant changes during the years it was on his drawing table: Solomon Guggenheim died, a nephew, Harry Guggenheim, assumed charge of the project, Hilla Rebay left, Sweeney took her place, the site for the museum was twice enlarged by the purchase of adjoining properties, and the nature and amount of art to be exhibited was greatly altered. Building costs rose, and a plan for an elegant cladding in either red marble or black granite—Wright's choices—gave way to the relative cheapness of poured concrete, painted a light beige. Even before the building was officially opened, the upper reaches of the ramp had been closed off with plywood panels to provide space for storage, and the continuous strip of skylights that marched up the ever-widening perimeter of the "optimistic ziggurat" (Wright's phrase) had been blacked out; according to Sweeney, they would have thrown light not gently onto the paintings, as Wright had calculated, but disconcertingly into the eyes of visitors.

By the eighties, years of necessary but clumsy tamperings with the museum's structure, along with insufficient maintenance and the air of seediness which always accompanies it, had gravely injured the building's appearance. Thanks to the much increased size of the collection and the inescapable structural difficulties involved in exhibiting even a small portion of it, the building had become a straitjacket. When Thomas Krens was appointed director of the museum, in 1988, the board of trustees, presided over by Peter Lawson-Johnston (a grandson of Solomon Guggenheim), had begun the radical program of restoration and expansion that—at a cost of something over sixty million dollars, raised in large part by means of a city-backed bond issue—has just been brought to a triumphant conclusion.

TO deal first with the question that everyone is quick to ask: Has the original Wright building survived unharmed the addition of the wing, designed by the architectural firm of Gwathmey Siegel & Associates, that has now risen behind it? The answer is that it has. The wing is a slender, modest, nearly windowless structure,

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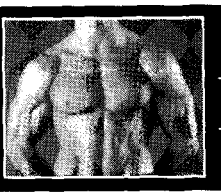
sheathed in sharply demarcated rectangles of gray limestone. At the moment, the freshly painted white concrete shell of the Wright building doesn't stand out against the wing with quite enough definition to assert its independence, but Charles Gwathmey assures me that the limestone will darken somewhat with time and, in doing so, will create an attractive contrast between the old and the new. The wing, in its tactful neutrality, consents to its role as a backdrop, and it is certainly an improvement over the backdrop it has replaced—the nondescript sidewall of the apartment house at 4 East Eighty-ninth Street, with its scattering of windows of different sizes and shapes.

The integrity of the exterior of the Wright ziggurat remains undiminished. At the same time, it has been adroitly—which is to say all but invisibly—enabled to serve a variety of new uses. A portion of the flat roof that connects the new building to the old has been made into a delightful outdoor sculpture garden, which looks out over the little rotunda at the Eighty-ninth Street side of the building toward the Central Park reservoir. A roof terrace visualized by Wright as encircling the top of the main rotunda (and depicted by him as bearing the usual Wrightian mantle of hanging ivy) was never built, in part for reasons of economy and in part because the Baroness Rebay held that the dirt of New York City rendered all roof gardens useless. Rightly ignoring the opinion of the Baroness, Gwathmey Siegel has tucked a paved terrace neatly into place on the roof, providing a view of Central Park and the Camelot-like towers of Central Park West even more spectacular than the one from the sculpture garden. Because it is difficult to reach, this terrace will be open to the general public only on tours, but it will no doubt serve the museum well as a venue for fund-raising parties and other social occasions.

On the ground-floor level, a broad ramp leads down from the Fifth Avenue sidewalk to the basement of the building. From this ramp one will be able to enter the restaurant that was part of Wright's original plan but whose space was usurped a few years after the museum's opening by the needs of conservators. (The restaurant will open in a few months.) Also accessible from the bottom of the ramp is the circular auditorium—much battered by hard



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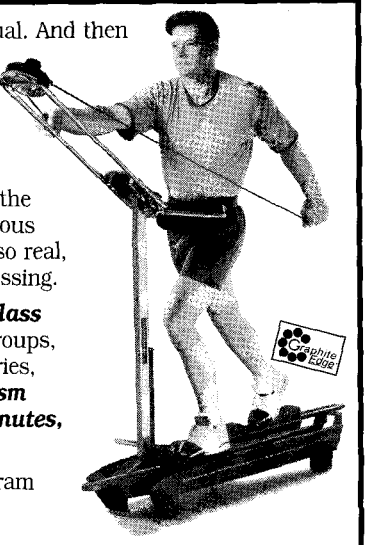

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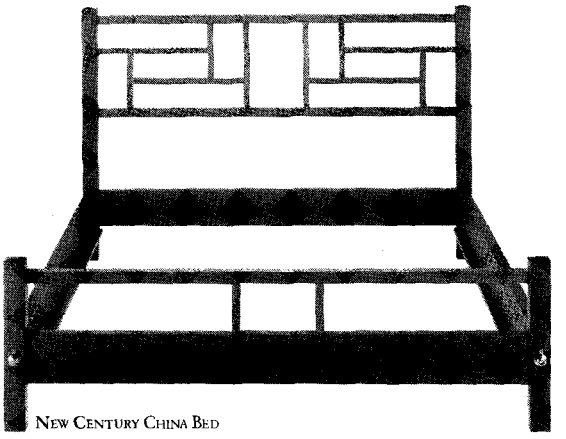

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use and awaiting restoration—that Wright fitted into the space directly below the rotunda. For the first time, one will be able to enter the auditorium directly from the street as well as from the interior of the building; this may make it an attractive place in which to hold neighborhood events that have no connection with the museum. Adjacent to the auditorium is a labyrinth of offices for the museum staff, carved out of bedrock under the sidewalks of Fifth Avenue; similar habitable cellars have been dug under the sidewalks of Eighty-eighth and Eighty-ninth Streets.

Standing on Fifth Avenue with my back to Central Park, I feel sure that the Guggenheim has never before come so close to being the structure that Wright in his last years had hoped to see and never saw. The building radiates an inimitable joyous quiddity, as Wright's Spring Green "Romeo and Juliet" windmill does, and as the best of his houses—especially La Miniatura and Fallingwater—also do. If it strikes us as eccentric (and how could it not, given the company it keeps on that architecturally conventional thoroughfare?), it escapes the taint of the willfully bizarre which afflicts such late works of Wright's as the Arizona State Capitol project and his projects for the King of Iraq.

Krens, who was closely involved with every aspect of the restoration, and the architects have taken particular pains over the interior of the Wright building. The plaster walls of the rotunda were stripped down to the outer concrete shell and then replastered by hand, in what is thought to be, in this era of comparatively inexpensive drywall construction, the largest hand-plastering job carried out here in over a quarter of a century. The predominating interior color—a shade of white—is no doubt more dazzling than Wright would have wished (he had a turn-of-the-century, arts-and-crafts fondness for sand colors that few people share nowadays), but what a trifle this is in the face of so conscientious a feat of restoration!

If the restoration appears to signal a final victory of Wright over Sweeney, we must take care to remember that it is a victory owed largely to the removal of makeshifts that Sweeney and his successor, Thomas Messer, were forced to improvise in order to accommodate the minimal needs of the museum; now that most of these needs have been taken care of elsewhere, the Wright building has come into its own as a work of art—even, if one wishes to be severe, as a work of art in the long and honorable tradition of the folly. (No very high standard of critical severity would be required to say of the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington and of the Beaubourg, in Paris, that they, too, are primarily follies, however well or badly they may perform as museums.) Krens says, "The simple fact is that we have relieved the pressure on the Wright building. The rotunda lends itself admirably to certain exhibitions, like the Dan Flavin show with which we are celebrating our return to normal operations. Meanwhile, our permanent collection can be exhibited to the best possible effect elsewhere, whether in another part of the building, in the new wing, or in the SoHo Guggenheim."

By a happy chance, all that was needed to provide easy access between the Wright building and the Gwathmey Siegel addition was a scarcely observable breaching of the walls at the rear of the old building. Roughly equivalent in height to a standard ten-story office building, and with a "footprint" measuring thirty-five feet along East Eighty-ninth Street and a hundred feet deep, the wing has four capacious galleries, each occupying an entire floor; two floors of offices; and, on the ground floor, a staff entrance and a sizable off-street loading dock. One notices at once the welcome expanse of level floor in the galleries, ideally suited to the installation of sculpture, and the no less welcome expanse of vertical wall space. Many of the Guggenheim's pictures are, after all, whoppers: Léger's "Great Parade" is almost ten feet high and thirteen feet long, and a triptych by Francis Bacon entitled "Three Studies for a Crucifixion" is only a few square feet smaller.

Big pictures will find even more wall space available to them at the SoHo Guggenheim. A colossal six-story structure handsomely clad in brick, 575 Broadway was built in the early eighteen-eighties by the Astor estate, to designs by a favorite Astor architect, Thomas Stent. Originally, a popular

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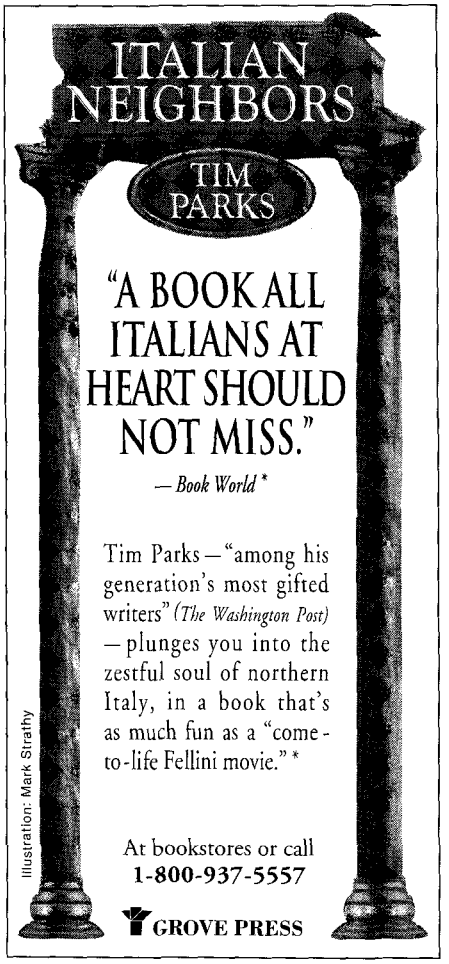
men's store, Rogers Peet, occupied much of the ground-floor retail space; the upper floors were devoted to the manufacture of such indispensable Victorian items as suspenders and bridal veils. The Guggenheim now has two full floors of the building, along with parts of two others and an unusually high-ceilinged basement. Arata Isozaki, who designed the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and is currently engaged, with the local architectural firm of James Stewart Polshek & Partners, in making substantial additions to the Brooklyn Museum, has been in charge of turning the raw space of 575 into that complex dovetailing of separate entities—including a shop and a restaurant—which no budget-minded museum can afford to be without these days.

Isozaki has hollowed an airy court out of the dark core of the building; a spectacular steel stairway (not yet completed) will zigzag down from the ground floor to the basement. One of the SoHo Guggenheim's galleries is twenty feet high and two hundred feet long—surely among the largest uninterrupted picture-hanging spaces in the city—and an area of almost equal length and height has been divided into a succession of galleries reminiscent of the boxy salons of an earlier time, and suitable for the more diminutive of the Guggenheim's treasures.

OF the many aspects of the transformation of the Guggenheim, the one for which Krens and his board of trustees and his architects may be most highly regarded by history is the intelligence with which they have solved the problem of the Wright building, giving it to us at last purged of its vexations. Today, we are free to enjoy it as a museum, to the limited degree to which it succeeds as one; we are also free to enjoy it as what Wright called it in an early and hopeful stage of his correspondence with Hilla Rebay—"a creation." He saw it as having no more reason to be limited by its announced purpose than the design of the Larkin Administration Building was limited by being the headquarters of a soap manufacturer, or Unity Temple by being a meeting place for Unitarians. (Wright said of the temple, "I don't give a damn what the use of it is; I wanted to build a building like that.") A certain design twitched and burned in his fingertips and would reach paper; then by innumerable cajolings and beguilements it would spring up out of the ground and assert dominion. For to Wright what he had created was always more than a structure; it was a world. According to Wright's view, we were fortunate to be able to enter these worlds of his—and still more fortunate to be able, not without some preliminary hardship, to feel at home in them. They were a test of our worthiness, not of his. Joyce said that his ideal reader was one prepared to devote a lifetime to reading him; similarly, Wright's ideal client would willingly spend a lifetime consenting to the tyranny of his genius.

The Guggenheim serves as an excellent example of Wright's power over us. It has a characteristically unobtrusive entrance, to which we are drawn not so much by catching sight of it as by the configuration of the building, which folds inward beneath a smooth cliff face of concrete and invites us to penetrate it, as we might penetrate some enormous cave. The building overhangs our heads as we step forward; the potential crushing weight floating above us is made all the more vivid by the fact that its undersurface, sloping downward to the entrance, seems to be almost within reach of a raised hand. Crossing the tiny lobby into the rotunda, we discover that Wright, by his manipulation of radically opposed volumes of space—compressed in the lobby, explosive in the rotunda—has succeeded in evoking in us, from one instant to the next, emotions of disorientation, exhilaration, and release. Perhaps only half-consciously, we perceive that we have participated in what amounts quite literally to an age-old rite of passage and initiation. In the low-ceilinged lobby, we might be making our way through some sort of prehistoric burrow; when we emerge abruptly, blinking, into the bedazzlement of the rotunda, we enter a space that seems uncannily without fixed dimensions. All around us the great ramp spins upward to a dome that, unlike the dome of a Renaissance basilica, sublimely simulating Heaven, chooses instead to be but a playful pagan wheel of glass—a child's toy buoyantly arrested in flight a hundred feet above our heads. As if for the first time (though we may be experiencing it for the thousandth), we stand there astonished and disembodied, immured in light. —BRENDAN GILL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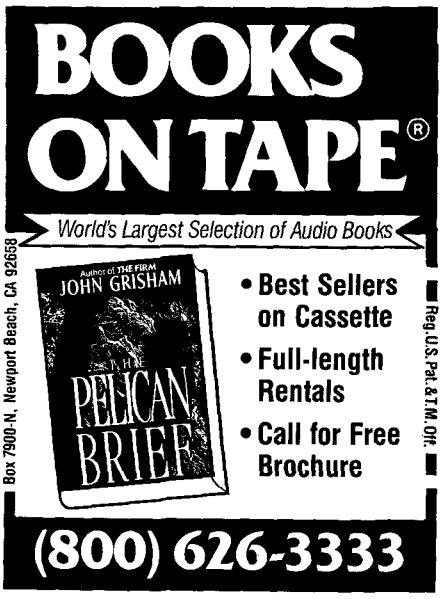
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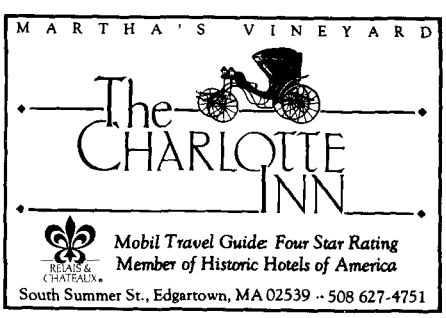
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BOOKS

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

THE PAINTED ALPHABET, by Diana Darling (Houghton Mifflin; $19.95). A dazzling little gem of a novel, in which Siladri, a troubled young Balinese man, retreats into the mountains to study with Mpu Dibiaja, a holy sage who values humor above piety and lives in a secluded house guarded by wild animals. Siladri leaves his son behind in the village to be raised by his brother, but the brother insists that Siladri take *his* little daughter in return, to accompany him on his pilgrimage. The eventual reunion of the cousins forms the central knot in a complex pattern of siblings and lovers separated and rejoined. The story is based on an ancient Balinese fairy tale, but it has none of the lurking, repressed desire that can make Western fairy tales unsettling. Sexuality is on the surface here, in the whimsical luxury of the writing and in the characters themselves, who are more sensual than intellectual in their truth-seeking. In Ms. Darling's Bali, TVs and tourists coexist with ancient rituals and fierce teen-age witches—but she presents this odd mixture of the modern and the magical with such ease and conviction that it feels instantly timeless.

BRIGHTNESS FALLS, by Jay McInerney (Knopf; $23). This ingratiating, ambitious novel tells the story of Corrine and Russell Calloway, a young New York couple who in the course of the nineteen-eighties manage to experience what seems suspiciously like every one of the decade's magazine-cover crises. The action turns on an attempted takeover of a publishing firm, during which the Calloways encounter unscrupulous editors, unscrupulous Wall Streeters, and unscrupulous authors. Mr. McInerney's talents for describing domestic love and for humor struggle to find expression, but the human moments are entombed within a numbingly resolute framework of commercial-fiction conventions. Finally, this novel reads less like a study of the manners of a period than like an inventory of the clichés of its entertainments.

TURTLE MOON, by Alice Hoffman (Putnam; $21.95). Ms. Hoffman's ninth novel is a lush melodrama about children, lost and found. It unfolds in the town of Verity, Florida, during the month of May, when the sea turtles begin their annual migration, and when everything that can go wrong does go wrong: cars skid into the gumbo-limbo trees, marriages crumble, affairs begin, and rattlesnakes take up residence in the public phone booths. Those who grew up in Verity know this—they put aspirins in their Coke and avoid making big decisions—but Lucy Rosen, a divorcée from Great Neck, is caught off guard by the soaring temperatures and sudden bad luck. By the third of the month, a woman in Lucy's building has been murdered and Lucy's delinquent twelve-year-old son ("the meanest boy in Verity") is missing, along with the victim's baby daughter. Ms. Hoffman, a thrilling storyteller, overindulges her strengths here, so that her stylistic flourishes sometimes verge on self-parody, but she makes up for it by sidestepping the sweet conclusion the reader craves.

GENERAL

COMPLETE COLLECTED ESSAYS, by V. S. Pritchett (Random House; $35). Eight earlier collections—two hundred and three essays—in one giant volume of over thirteen hundred pages, without a word of preface. Pritchett's great critical gift, exercised through much of this century, is at bottom dramatic: an ability to see authors as actors, performing on a bright, populated stage. The stage is given vast breadth and depth by the critic's reading, a reading comprehensive not only in the literature of the British Isles but in that of France and Russia and the Iberian peninsula. European history to him is one long, lively anecdote, and books are a set of excuses for warm and worldly gossip.

Pritchett's style, perfected in the narrow spaces in which British critics are required to deliver judgment, giddily skips into the lyric: "Fun in English literature is as regular as muffins; the honest bell rings in the sad fog of the London Sunday and we stir ingenuously between one indigestion and the next, in our drowsy chairs." The erudite, manic adventurer Richard Burton "is an almost pestiferous pursuer of whatever can be turned into a footnote." In Hardy, "we are always struck by the largeness of the panorama and by the narrowness of Hardy's single, crooked, well-trodden path across it." Leaving the obvious unstated, the essays can seem cryptic and teasingly compressed. The quirky, witty tone suddenly yields declarations of a confidently generalizing human wisdom: "Remove the vices of a novelist and his virtues vanish too"; Ouida "is not the first novelist to have delusions of grandeur . . . for when one is dealing in fantasy, it is not unnatural to help oneself." It was a happy circumstance of a dire time that the shortages of wartime England included new books, and Pritchett was obliged to reread for review the classic productions of Fielding and Swift, Richardson and Scott. Certain writers, such as Smollett and Ouida and Thomas Hood, may have received from him the last intelligent consideration they will ever get. Few of the significant imaginers of the last several centuries go unmentioned here; the index to this huge volume gives us access to an encyclopedic wealth of shrewd appraisals and animated reconstructions, wherein Sir Victor's love of literature and love of life are indistinguishable.

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ATTACK DATE INCORRECT

Due to a reporting error, it was incorrectly reported Saturday that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on June 7, 1941. The correct date is Dec. 1, 1941.

The *Texarkana Gazette* regrets the error.—*Texarkana* (*Texas*) *Gazette.*

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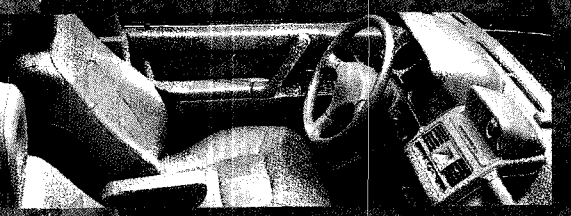

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